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THE
PRIEST'S NIECE;

OR,

THE HEIRSHIP OF BARNULPH.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "LIONEL DEERHURST."

"We'll talk of life, though much I fear
The unwelcome tale will wound your ear."—COTTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1855.

249. A. 217.

THE PRIEST'S NIECE.

CHAPTER I.

It has been said that unless a castle can boast of some heroic traditions, it is not worthy of such an exalted title. The very name recalls historic memories of feudal power and grandeur, while imagination peoples the halls with haughty barons, chaste dames, beautiful demoiselles, and youthful warriors flushed with victory, who in the olden times graced the baronial halls, where masqueing, music, dancing, feasting, and revelry reigned

in all the profuse and magnificent hospitality of a powerful, despotic, but generous and noble aristocracy. But these magnates of the land and their times have passed away, and of their deeds, be they good or evil, nought now remains but in the wild legends, marvellous in their romance, and rendered interesting by the halo shed by distance over scenes which probably were common-place realities enough.

Castle Barnulph, the venerable pile with which many of the incidents of our tale are connected, was situated on the extreme border of Berwick-upon-Tweed, and for ages had been the stronghold of the Barnulphs, who boasted of being descended from the first Anglo-Saxons, and having at one period reigned as chiefs over a vast northern territory. Be that as it may, they managed under all changes of dynasties to preserve

their donjon keep, and a wide tract of land ; and to judge by the records of their house, they had been imbued with that worldly wisdom, which, with little respect to patriotism or faith, ever sides with the dominant power. Acting up to this principle of self-interest, and aided by a keen perception of coming events, the then chief of the Barnulphs was among the first of the northern gentlemen to adopt the tenets of the Reformation ; and, as a consequence, thenceforward the Barnulphs became fierce controversialists of the doctrines they had adopted. This order of things continued with little variation until the reign of Charles the First of England.

During the blood-stained period of the famous Covenant, when puritanism had reached its climax, and its influence was bordering on certain conquest, the then reigning laird

of the house of Barnulph, with the wary selfishness of his ancient race, put forth his strength to uphold the rebels to his king ; while his two sons not only adopted the royal cause, but, led on by enthusiasm and mistaken views of chivalry, actually entered into a secret negotiation with the leaders of the royal party to admit them, during the silent hours of the night, into the Castle of Barnulph ; stipulating, however, that no violence should be offered to any of the garrison or other inhabitants of the castle. As the old chieftain, never doubting his sons' faith or honour—for they had kept from his knowledge the sentiments they had imbibed at the university—had intrusted to their keeping the keys of his donjon and the command of his guard of sturdy yeomen, all seemed easy of execution, when, by a tissue of unforeseen events, the plot was disco-

vered on the very evening preceding its execution.

Any attempt to delineate the shame and heart-rending despair of the chief at this discovery of the treachery of his recreant sons were vain. Rousing from the chill of horror which for a period seemed to have paralyzed him, he loudly called for his sons to answer for their crime: but, aware of danger, they had found sanctuary among the royalists. This enkindled all the old man's fury; every sentiment resolved into an insatiable desire of revenge upon his treacherous sons. True to their king, but false to him, the punishment he entailed on the male heirs of his house is illustrative of the dark feeling which under the name of religion influenced the age; so he bequeathed his castle, with its wide domains, to his daughter; and though she had several sons, the fief was to descend

to her daughter, and in event of her death, to the next ; in short, the usual disposal of property was reversed, and the females, not the males, of the Barnulphs were to be heirs. So utter was the exclusion of sons, that, in default of daughters, should one inherit, then on his daughter attaining the age of eighteen, she stepped in as heiress, to the exclusion of her father and brothers. This strange disposal of property was ratified by the stern Protector, the chief of Barnulph having been his friend as well as supporter ; and subsequently the Merry Monarch was persuaded by the heiress of his times, granddaughter of the revengeful chief, to renew the grant. Some said her fair form won over the monarch to side against his faith and friendships, others that he was bribed to the act ; be that as it may, he put his royal signet and name to a deed setting aside the male

heirs of the house of Barnulph, and a copy of this curious document is still preserved in the archives of the Tower. But even this act of visiting the sin of his sons on the male generations did not content the chief's unchristian vengeance; for a short period before his death, kneeling at the high altar of his forefathers, and giving solemnity to the scene by surrounding himself with the symbols of a ritual he had formerly despised, he poured forth a terrible anathema, that woe and tribulation might be the portion of the male heirs, who should, by failure of females, or by stratagem, or from any other cause, inherit the fief of Barnulph.

Here we may remark that each successive heiress of the house of Barnulph, probably influenced by superstition, spared neither money nor interest to confirm by legal measures the settlement of the old chief on the female line.


We have entered into a full detail of this disposition of the Barnulph estates, because hence sprang the principal incidents of the story we now propose to narrate.

CHAPTER II.

At the period of which we write, the stronghold of the Barnulphs had undergone vast changes. Until the wars of the Reformation it had merely been a donjon, flanked with low towers, built in the ponderous style of early Saxon architecture. Its situation rendered it impregnable ; for it was erected on an elevation, which at the northern side rose almost perpendicularly from the water's edge, the frowning preci-


pices forming a natural bulwark ; while to the east were hills clothed with woods of Norway pines. From every point the prospect was wild and extensive : on the border side, a distant bird's-eye view of the Scottish coast could be enjoyed ; south and west were long stretches of barren land, enamelled with heaths or shaded by trees, pasture grounds with their flocks and herds in some degree relieving the sternness of the scene.

Although the original home of the Barnulphs was long untenanted, it was venerated by the family as the proudest heir-loom of their boasted ancestry, whose gallantry they equalled, as was oft proved in the battlefield. So addition after addition was made, until the castle became an imposing pile of building, and in its various orders of architecture might be traced the progress of the noble art : so justly, however, had the differ-



ent parts been arranged, so graceful were the combinations, that the effect, though irregular, was rather pleasing than offensive to the eye. The ancient stronghold with its towers draped with ivy, its heavy granite buttresses clothed with soft moss, enamelled with lichens, wild geraniums, and stone crops, which, when in bloom, formed a brilliant mosaic ; and exhaled the fragrant, refreshing perfume of young Spring over the mildewed time-worn battlements, which with gigantic strength rose as a breast-work to protect the modern improvements from the fierce blasts of the north, wildly sweeping over the waters of the Tweed.

Still more striking were the improvements of the grounds. The broad table-land, on which the castle stood, nearly as barren as the adjoining rocks, was now covered with a deep rich soil, laid at vast trouble and



expense, and adorned with clumps of flowering shrubs and groups of trees. The deep fosse turned into a sparkling trout stream, fringed with evergreens, and spanned by light rustic bridges, answered as a fence to keep off the incursions of the herds of cattle, the only invaders the chiefs of Barnulph had then to guard against.

Such was the residence of the heiress of Barnulph towards the conclusion of the eighteenth century, when she came, in the flush of bridal happiness, to take her high place in the castle, too long neglected by its haughty race, who found their pleasures in foreign lands. Under her auspices, the western wing, containing the finest suites of apartments, was fitted up with a taste and magnificence little known in that remote locality ; and with a hospitality worthy of the heiress, a succession of entertainments and

sylvan sports enlivened the neighbourhood. These had continued but for a few months, when the death of Baron Barnulph (a title which ever accompanied the husband of the heiress) put a check on all pleasures at the castle. The event had occurred in London ; and so great was the shock to his widow, that many years elapsed ere she could reconcile herself to return to the castle, the scene of her bright, but short-lived bridal days of unalloyed bliss.

Reinstalled in her ancestral home, generous in feeling, as well as of her wealth, she resolved to direct the riches in which her widowed heart found no joy, to the advantage of others ; for this purpose, once more her lofty halls were crowded with guests, and for miles round the poor experienced the support of a charity judicious as extended, and enhanced by the amiable manner of the giver.

There was nothing egotistic in the popularity thus, unsought for, gained by the baroness. She possessed the rare gift of being loved for herself, and respect and esteem went hand in hand with the affection she awakened. To this were united interest and sympathy ; for while all flew to her for assistance or consolation in their trouble, it was understood that she was peculiarly unhappy in her domestic circle. Her son, a posthumous child, had disappointed her hopes ; but as the lady of Barnulph never spoke of her family, anything respecting them was merely known, or rather guessed at, through vague reports, sufficient to excite curiosity, but unequal to gratify scandal. One circumstance, however, was a positive fact : for the last few years, whenever any of the relatives of the baroness visited the castle, there was an immediate cessation of

its hospitalities ; while they, under one plea or another, declined receiving or returning visits, all, except the good lady herself, who perhaps, as compensations when thus circumstanced called more frequently on her friends, and, if possible, was more bountiful in her alms-giving.

Here was a mystery ; why should Lady Barnulph's family, who until late years had been so courteous—nay, even familiar and friendly—thus decline mixing with the aristocratic and respectable families in the neighbourhood ? It was passing strange ; and in a locality so remote, and with few objects save the routine of every-day life to command attention, became quite a subject of interest.

A few months ere our tale commences, the dear old dame—the good Lady Barnulph—being full of years and grace, was gathered to her Saxon forefathers.

The good lady was gone—she had flitted away to join the shadows of the past, her place knew her no more ; and who now was to fill that place became the question—the curiosity—the interest—who was the present possessor of that proud home ; for

“ Heir crowds heir, as in a rolling flood
Wave urges wave——”

And now over the wide seas from distant lands—from Spain—from India—hundred-tongued Rumour, in faint whispers—for who dared boldly assert such awful accusations?—circulated reports of the descendants of the good departed dame, enough to torture curiosity as it vainly strove to trace these mystic whispers to their source. Some relief was afforded to their unsatisfactory surmises, and eternal gossip, so indefinite in its ignorance, and talkative in its ill-nature, by the arrival of Sir Chudleigh Merton, who, taking pos-

session of the castle as its heir, at once assumed the distinguished name of Barnulph. Here was something for the wonder-loving neighbours to chat over.

“What chief is this that visits us from far,
Whose gallant mien bespeaks him trained for war?”

This poetic description fully answered Sir Merton, a military knight, who had been much distinguished during the late Peninsular war, and was said to have subsequently filled a place of high trust in India. Though not much known in the neighbourhood of Barnulph, some of its gentry had formerly made his acquaintance, and his character as a gallant soldier had oft filled the columns of the press; then he was a K.C.B. All this was well, so said Curiosity; but then arose the inquiry, how came this knight to be the heir? Could it be that Therese, the beautiful

—the beloved grandchild of the departed lady of honourable memory—the undisputed heiress of Barnulph, was dead? Of her marriage, of her having a child, all had heard—but of her death, none ; thus, even though in general, on the appearance of the substance, the shadows of imagination vanish, the good people, great and small, of the neighbourhood, in despite of the tall, portly, proud and haughty bearing of Sir Merton, reverted to their whispered and nodded surmises of scandal ; for after his arrival they were careful not to express aloud the tale of detraction.

A better feeling also rendered Sir Chudleigh Merton's heirship unpopular. The name of Barnulph had held a foremost place ere Berwick-on-Tweed had been annexed to the crown of England. Even with inanimate objects they were amalgamated. The druidical remains which lay between the donjon keep and the Frith of Forth, with a few still

remaining oaks of the once sacred grove, that had shaded the mystic rites, bore deeply engraven the names of the high priests Barnulph; while rocks, caverns, rivulets received interest from some legend connecting them with the fortunes of that once powerful family; and to the honour of human nature, the good people of Barnulph sincerely grieved to see a stranger fill their place. However, as all their most active inquiries, urged on by a natural love of scandal, and the gossip which forms the chief moral aliment of remote thinly inhabited districts, failed in acquiring more than very vague and unsatisfactory information as to the reason why Sir Chudleigh Merton assumed the name of Barnulph, and took possession of the castle; we, who are, of course, fully acquainted with the details, will satisfy the reader's natural curiosity on the subject.

CHAPTER III.

THE good Lady Barnulph, as we have already seen, had been left a widow some thirteen months after her union ; and seven weeks subsequent to the baron's death she gave birth to a posthumous son, whom she named Harold. Such was the good lady's devotion to the memory of her beloved husband, that she resolved to consecrate herself to his memory, and never permit another to supply his place ; and to this resolve she

adhered, in despite of the entreaties of many a gallant youth ; for the heiress of Barnulph, even in widowhood, was a prize well worth the seeking.

Friends, too, had striven to change her resolve, by reminding her of the awful anathemas of the old chief against the male heirs of Barnulph ; indeed, the first heiress, Grinulda, had had the denunciation recorded in gold letters, and richly illuminated, and framed, hung up exactly opposite to the principal entrance into the hall of the castle, that all might read and believe and shun the threatened danger. Besides this really curious relic, all through the apartments were framed records of the curse, for each successive heiress had the original copied—all of them, it appeared, being solicitous to reserve the rights of heirship in the female line. And it would seem that Dame

Nature, being feminine, favoured her sex ; for until the birth of Harold there had been no failure of issue in the female line since the memorable days of Charles the First of England.

Imbued with the warlike spirit of his gallant ancestors, from childhood Harold displayed a taste for the army ; and his mother, incapable of one selfish feeling, though she regretted the sentiment, never thwarted it : consequently, he early went into a military college, and from thence, while yet a youth, obtained a commission in the ———, Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell's regiment. Under that brave commander Harold entered the Savannah, and subsequently so distinguished himself, as to obtain his company.

While rejoicing in her son's successes in honourable fight, Lady Barnulph received a letter from Colonel Campbell, announcing that

under the influence of passion, Harold had wedded a young Cuban girl of extreme beauty, and reported to be an heiress. So far all was well ; still Colonel Campbell was obliged to admit that the union was most unfortunate, as Don Davales, the bride's father, and her maternal grandfather, (her mother had long been dead) were publicly known as men of infamous character. They had held places of high trust in the commissariat department, from which they had been dismissed under circumstances so disgraceful, that it was generally believed, if legally prosecuted, they would be condemned to transportation.

Don Davales and his father-in-law, to elude the possibility of a trial, secretly escaped to St. Jagos, the home of the former ; and, influenced by his bride, Harold, in defiance of his Colonel, and the entreaties of

his corps, gave up his company, and followed his nefarious relations to Cuba, madly forfeiting fame, country, respectability, on the altar of passion, for a lovely but weak woman.

We have not leisure to dwell upon the deep grief of Lady Barnulph, on receiving this intelligence: nobly suppressing it, she at once wrote to her son, requesting of him to proceed forthwith to England with his bride, where she would receive them both with maternal tenderness. This kindness was not accepted; and from that time the fate of Harold became involved in obscurity; the following particulars being all that ever came to his friends' knowledge.

Don Davales, a Spaniard by birth, from having been the possessor of vast wealth, through one cause or another, was almost reduced to poverty: anticipating that his ne-

furious speculations in the commissariat might any day be brought to light, and supposing that Captain Barnulph, then but twenty, would, on coming of age, be heir to great wealth, he won him on to marry Neno, not quite seventeen at the period. Beautiful in person, gentle in temper, but of nervous habits ; sufficiently intellectual for the common events of life, but too weak and timid to rise against the pressure of violence or passion ; such was Harold's bride.

Loving Neno with all the enthusiasm of a first passion, Harold scarcely wasted a thought on any other object. His raptures were increased by the prospect of becoming a father ; and then he was secretly resolved to accept Lady Barnulph's invitation, and proceed to England. Meantime he had nothing to complain of. Don Davales, no matter how, kept up a good establishment, and

meaning to partake largely of his son-in-law's wealth, it was his policy to please the young Englishman, whom he disliked in his heart for his liberal opinions and manly bearing. Consequently, the family at St. Jagos got on amicably until the birth of the expected child, which proved a boy, and was born exactly six weeks after Harold had reached his 'one-and-twentieth year.

Don Davales now thought that the golden fruits of Neno's union must be partaken of by himself ; he had secured by settlement that this child, Neno's son, was to be educated in the Romish faith, so that when Harold proceeded to England to arrange his estate, he would have legal power to keep the child as a hostage of his father's return ; for he placed no trust in the honour of one of England's heretical race.

It was not, however, until Neno was sufficiently well to travel, that an *eclaircissement* took place between her father and husband ; and it led to a scene of violence and future hatred, ruinous to the happiness of Neno Davales.

In his impatience to marry his daughter to Harold, whom he never doubted to be the immediate heir of Barnulph, Davales had studiously shunned asking any questions which might rouse the young Englishman into reflection, but had got him to sign settlements which he calculated would give him full power over the property. At the time it had seemed to him strange that Harold carelessly remarked—

“ Pray arrange as you please, but do not delay my nuptials ; and, Davales, there is but one clause that I must stipulate for : any daughters I may have must be

educated in the creed of the Protestant church. There is no bigotry in this, as you must be fully aware; it being proved by my not objecting to my sons, if I should have any, being educated in their mother's faith."

But when the *eclaircissement* took place, and Davales found that, until Lady Barnulph's death, Harold would not inherit an acre, or be master of a guinea, except as her gift, and that the daughters of the house of Barnulph were the heirs, the sons having no provision,—his fury rose to insolence; he accused Harold of deceit, exposed his own poverty, and ended by a horrible oath that the infant should not be removed from his protection until he was fifteen: such was the marriage settlement, and it could not be set aside.

Harold was not slow to retaliate; and thus

an enmity, which only expired with the lives of the parties, was awakened.

* * * *

The next two years seemed to be marked by no events of consequence ; at least, none which ever reached England.

Harold never for a moment resigned his intention of proceeding to England ; but neither threats nor bribes could win over Don Davales to permit the departure of the boy Nial ; and Harold, ardent and sincere in his feelings of either good or evil, and being strongly imbued with the unrelenting and stedfast spirit of his race, and loving his infant son with the utmost tenderness—could not for any advantage, or from any hatred to Don Davales, quit the island, unless the little Nial accompanied him ; he therefore resolved to abide patiently for an opportunity of so escaping so soon as Neno was over her con-

finement, for now again she bore a pledge of his love in her bosom. Meantime, stooping to a deceit abhorrent to his nature, he strove to conciliate Davales, who, from motives equally sinister, received his advances with apparent courtesy ; and thus, to outward seeming, matters—certainly manners—were greatly improved in the domestic circle of St. Jagos.

Such was the state of things when Neno gave birth to a girl, little welcomed, except by the young tender mother, who folded it to her bosom as a treasure of love. Harold viewed the infant girl as one destined to usurp his place, and also that of his beloved Nial, then nearly three. Davales was disappointed ; he had hoped for another boy, to still farther chain Harold. There was something sad in this unwelcome reception of the poor babe by her parents ; and it is a saying among

the old wives, "that if you mourn over the birth of a babe, that babe will surely work your sorrow."

Scarcely five weeks had elapsed since Neno's confinement, when the opportunity of escape, so anxiously sought for by Harold, presented itself. The Swift, an English frigate, commanded by his particular friend, Captain Maudley, arrived just then at St. Jagos. Don Davales was confined by a severe fit of ague. Neno and her children were in full health, and Harold had ample means at his command. There was no impediment,—his happiness amounted to ecstasy: and Captain Maudley entering into his views, under favour of night, had all Harold's valuables, &c. conveyed to the Swift, in which he had set apart his own cabin, with a nurse and attendant in readiness for Neno's and her children's reception.

Aware of Neno's attachment to her father, and to Cuba, it was considered wise to carry her off by a coup de main, thus to shorten her regrets. On Tuesday morning the frigate was to sail, and on the Monday night previous Harold acquainted Neno with his design, pleading his cause with the eloquence of unabated love, and with truth solemnly assuring her that in England all within his circle should study to please, and never interfere with her religious opinions or duties.

Some promises relative to her father being gained, Neno, who, of all earthly objects, most tenderly loved her husband, consented, only annexing one condition, that Zoe, a Moorish girl, her companion and friend from infancy, and who now often acted as nurse to Nial, should accompany their flight.

To this Captain Barnulph offered no objection ; on the contrary, he expressed pleasure at the arrangement. It would be comfortable for Neno to have the companion and attendant of her youth in England ; then Nial, the dear boy, would have pined after his dark nurse.

So, tenderly holding his wife to his bosom, he blessed her for yielding to his plans ; renewing his assurances, that all in England, far as his power extended, should be conducive to her wishes and happiness.

Zoe, the Moor, Neno's friend, though inferior to her young mistress in point of rank, and from her childhood holding the position of Neno's attendant, had still been brought up as her companion, receiving all the advantages of her instructors ; and though two years junior to her mistress, the Moor

soon outstripped her in every accomplishment.

At the period of Neno's marriage, Zoe was in Cuba, and felt quite indignant at what she considered a *mésalliance*, and carried her disapprobation so far as to refuse to return to Neno. However, on the birth of Nial, being invited to act as sponsor to the child, she consented, and from that day assisted Neno in the delightful task of tending the boy, whom she loved with a mother's tenderness.

It was the Moor's wont on fête days to adorn her little charge with some peculiar symbol of the saint whose festival was observed, — branches of palm, holy ashes, staffs, crosses, lambs, crucifixes, relics, amulets, &c. Harold, since his quarrel with Don Davales had become very bitter against forms which before he had either considered inconsequent, or had not noticed ;

but now, when, in sullen mood, would sneeringly observe that he did not like these glorifications on his boy, and to the horror of Zoe, and the grief of the child—who naturally delighted in all that was bright—would tear them off and cast them aside. This was the mere ebullition of temper, for if the child cried, he would soothe it ; and then, on seeing the little arms twined round the dark throat of its nurse, walk off and forget the scene, or repeat it as a good joke.

Not so Zoe ; outraged, insulted in her pious aspirations, she imbibed towards Harold a vehement dislike — considered him as a heretic ; and consequently, when Neno confided to her the proposed elopement, she inwardly vowed to counteract a scheme which would place all those she loved under the thrall of a disbeliever.

Possessed of high resolve, and quick of

execution, without expressing her opinions to Neno, Zoe at once secured Nial by placing him in the celebrated convent of the Trappists, in St. Jago. She then applied for advice to some of the friends of Don Davales, but, either from fear or indifference, they declined interfering; so she then, with more success, persuaded Neno that her elopement to England would be a crime, and for ever separate her from her father and son. Weak, timid, wavering, Neno had, most unfortunately, ever yielded to the stronger sense of Zoe, who had insinuated into her mind some of her own wild dark beliefs in fatalism.

It were tedious to recapitulate the grief and anguish of Harold, when his weak, vacillating wife refused to accompany him, and that he found his son was torn from his protection. In vain, all the next day, and following night, did he, even on his knees,

and in tears, implore Neno to accompany him; though weeping, trembling, excusing, she rejected his supplications; till wrought nearly to frenzy, he snatched the infant Therese from her bosom, and darted from the chamber.

Captain Maudley dreaded that the Cubans, if the report went forth, would use violence; so he hurried off his friend, and the helpless babe, to the Swift; and in less than three hours the gallant vessel, with all its canvas swelled by a favourable gale, was rapidly steering Harold from the beautiful Spaniard, lately so tenderly and passionately loved,—and what the Englishmen felt to be a heavier affliction, from his sweet, innocent boy. As the island of Cuba receded, till quite lost in distance, Harold Barnulph breathed a bitter invective against Zoe, whose interference had snatched from his arms those

so dear—those belonging to him by every tie of nature and love. Fiercer had been that invective could he have foreseen the terrible influence the Moor would in after-years exercise over his family.

* * * *

Lady Barnulph received her son and his infant charge with pleasure, though secretly shocked and grieved at the sad alteration visible both in Harold's person and mind ; and though maternal love could excuse much, still the circumstances of his separation from his wife did not satisfy her sense of duty. While studying how to bring about a reconciliation, an account of Neno's death, written by an English physician who resided at St. Jago's, reached the castle. The timid, affectionate Spaniard, had not strength, either physical or moral, to contend with the conflict-

ing opinions and violent tempers to which she was subjected ; and some four weeks after the departure of her husband and infant, she expired. The physician, a friend of Harold's, mentioned that Don Davales had recovered, but was resolved that Nial should never, until the age of fifteen, join his hated father. However, the boy received every attention, as, whatever their faults in other respects, both his grandfathers fondly loved the child.

At this period, nothing could be more selfish or unamiable than Harold's conduct ; he commanded that his wife's name should never be alluded to, he wore no mourning in respect to her memory, and he evidently disliked his smiling infant, the little Therese, the darling of all else in the castle ; and when his deeply-afflicted mother, who, from the hour of his birth, had studied to promote

his every wish, gently reproved his manner towards the inoffensive babe, and his haughty, reserved, unconfiding bearing towards herself, he betrayed the dark feeling which had taken possession of his once candid, upright soul, and in no measured words he would startle and reproach her for having drawn upon him the evil of his life. "Mother," he would say, "denial is vain—you were aware that woe and tribulation were to be the portion of the first male heir; yet, from a romantic consecration to the dead, you doomed me to the terrible penalty, and yourself to a joyless widowhood. You plead that you studied my advantage; that is false. When Therese reaches the age of eighteen, she must be heiress, with full power to cast me off; and, more bitter still, my lovely, dear child Nial, will also be disinherited for her. You see to what you

have doomed me ; had a sister been born to me, I had known my fate ; but educated as an heir, I find myself cast upon you, mother, or my own child, for support ; and you boast of this as a kindness."

Lady Barnulph bore up against this with gentle patience ; for she was aware that disappointment had depressed her son's mind, at times, to a very fearful degree. Fortunately Harold was aware of this gloomy state, and had moral strength to struggle against the Demon despair, and for that purpose travelled and paid visits : though to one so joyless, this required a strong effort.

During a stay that he made in Scotland, he happily formed an attachment to Miss Campbell, a relative of his esteemed commander and friend, Colonel Campbell.

Miss Campbell, some nine years Harold's senior, was rather plain in her appearance,

and unpossessed of those accomplishments most generally attractive to men. However, she was pious, truly amiable, unprejudiced, and free from affectation or pretension. It would seem as if Harold had selected her as being the very reverse of the young beautiful Spaniard, so tender and full of passion and enthusiasm.

Lady Barnulph rejoiced in any circumstance tending to her son's happiness, from whom she was again soon parted. Finding the climate of England too cold for his constitution, Harold accepted a place of high trust in Bombay; however, on leaving he consigned the little Therese solely to his mother's care, and this softened the pang of separation.

* * * *

There was a residence in the town of Bombay, attached to the place to which Ha-

rold Barnulph had been appointed ; and in it, some twelve months after their arrival in the island, Mrs. Barnulph gave birth to a daughter. She was called Eve, after Lady Barnulph ; and as she proved to be the only fruit of her father's second marriage, she became inexpressibly dear to him, though his heart still clung with its strongest affection to Nial, his son, the first-born, and whose fate was so involved in obscurity.

CHAPTER IV.

ALTHOUGH Captain Barnulph's residence in Bombay commanded many advantages, within a few years the health of his lady began to decline, for her constitution required the keen air of her native Scotland ; so he hired a villa among the hills where, she and the child Eve removed, while business required his almost constant presence at Bombay.

Without any pretensions to dignity, this country residence was the prettiest villa

possible. It was romantically situated on a rising ground, from which the heavy rains were conducted by artificial canals into a small lake below, encircled by walks and shrubberies, the eastern side of the house being sheltered by a wood of the finest cocoa trees in the island. The pleasure-grounds were confined, but adorned with fountains, statues, and every flowering plant the climate produced: altogether, it was a charming spot. In this happy home Eve Barnulph passed her bright and joyous childhood, though living in retirement; for, independent of delicate health, Mrs. Barnulph had no wish for society, and was very chary of expense. She was a quiet, domestic, canny Scotch woman, feeling no interest in any person without the circle of her family, confining her duties and occupations to the management of the household;

her affections being limited to her husband and child.

Ere Eve Barnulph had attained her sixteenth year, she lost her mother: sincerely as the affectionate girl mourned, she little anticipated the irreparable woe of losing such a friend, and adviser to guide her young steps along life's dreary path. The bereavement to Captain Barnulph was agonising; after the turbulent scenes of his youth, he had reposed with such implicit confidence on the truthfulness and good sense of his last and dearest, though least lovely wife; she was so tranquil, domestic, considerate, never interfering, and, though passionless, affectionate, attentive, and cheerful. These were the traits most valuable in a constant companion. She was gone, and he felt her loss so keenly, as to be again threatened with that fearful morbid depression. Once again resolved to

struggle against the dark influence by change of scene and climate, he decided on visiting England, and for this purpose applied for a twelvemonth's leave of absence. It was in August, during the heavy rains, that Mrs. Barnulph had died ; and early in the following spring was fixed for the departure from Bombay.

The young, joyous, graceful Eve received this intelligence with rapture ; as yet, she had never been beyond the island of her birth ; and to her view, England was the land of promise. Such pleasure to reside in the ancient castle, for ages the home of her distinguished ancestors ; to meet her venerable grandmother, to whose praises from infancy she had been accustomed ; but sweeter still, to her vivid hopes, was the anticipated society of her sister, from whom she had frequently received letters replete

with expressions of affection. Oh! there was bliss to Eve in the thought, for as yet she had never experienced the companionship of any person of her own age and sex ; and her heart was formed for friendship, even to a romantic degree—so imbued with the tender poetry of the East. Pure and harmonious as were these sentiments, they found no expression. Her mother, though amiable, had been so common-place and practical, that Eve would have blushed to pour forth her fancies ; and Captain Bar-nulph, though he might win on the affections of his child, was incapable, from his gloom and sternness, of gaining the confidence of his timid, sensitive daughter.

Discovering, even by her subdued remarks, the delight she expected from her sister's companionship, with unusual softness her father said,—

“Eve, you should remember, that since my settling in Bombay, I have twice been sent officially to England.”

“Perfectly do I remember it, dear papa.”


“Of course, each time I sent to the castle; thus I became acquainted with Therese, your sister, my daughter—the heiress”—he sneered bitterly.

“Dear papa,” Eve said, gently pressing his hand, “I would like to hear of Therese herself; as to wealth, I cannot comprehend its value.”

He looked into her full, hazel eyes, parted her hair over her forehead, to which he pressed his lips, then said,—

“Eve, while there was no prospect of your seeing your sister, I did not give my opinion; but now I shall speak freely, to prevent your exalted views of her sisterly companionship being disappointed. Therese is

pretty, extremely pretty, but she has been spoiled by flattery — still more by over-teaching and uncurbed indulgence. My good mother, only weak through her affections, and solicitous that Therese's attainments should equal her position, spared no expense for governesses and masters; and they, aware of the importance of at once improving and conciliating the heiress, set to work with admirable tact for their purpose. Through a vain emulation to excel others in accomplishments, the masters urged the pupil on to attention, by a more dangerous coquetry; the governess aroused passion for conquest, by eulogizing Therese's natural charms, inducing her to study music and dancing, by representing how much their attainment would add to her attractions, and render her irresistible. Thus flattery taught Therese to aim at being



an idol, to be courted and worshipped for extraneous causes. Morals were not even a secondary consideration, when admiration was to be her aim, her joy, and only hope. Well, the result fully answers the expectations of the teacher.

“Therese, in the general acceptation of the word, is accomplished, but in consequence of every hour and thought of her young life being devoted to improvement, there was no leisure for the play of natural tastes or feelings; in fact, every spark of nature or truth has been extinguished, and I regret to say she is both selfish and egotistic,—careless of the feelings or happiness of others—granting nought, expecting all.”

Tears started to Eve's eyes, but she passed no remark. Observing her emotion, Captain Barnulph hastily said,—

“Nay, I am sorry ; Eve your excellent mother always checked these ebullitions against your sister ; and as I have been severe on her, let me not spare myself. From the day I tore her from her mother’s breast, I imbibed a feeling of dislike against the innocent babe. It was wrong, very wrong ; still I never have been able to conquer it. In short, her position as heiress, to her brother’s exclusion, and to mine, is unnatural, at least unusual, and no doubt has had its effect ; so forget, my child, my sweet Eve, all I have said ; love your sister ; spoiled as she is, she must and will love you.”

There was a pause ; Eve timidly laid her hand on her father’s, enquiring,—

“Is there any hope of my seeing my brother ? I almost think it would be too much of joy.”

"Nay, Eve," he replied, in subdued accents, then sighed—"when last I was in England, Nial was with me during my stay in London, being on his way to Cuba, to his grandfather, Don Davales; he had not leisure to accompany me to the castle; but now he has promised to join me there,—as at present he is in Ireland."

"Is he like Therese?" she demanded. "I hope, dear father, his system of education has met your views. I know that Nial is your favourite child."

Captain Barnulph replied, with a deeper sigh, "By no means. Still, Nial appears so upright and candid, that I expect improvement. Old Davales, the greatest bigot Spain ever produced—as an oblation, no doubt, for the crimes proved against his hoary head, and in despite of Nial's tastes being military—sent him to a college in Catalonia, to be

educated for the church. The profession was abhorrent to the spirited boy ; so, after a time, he made his escape, and proceeded to the west of Ireland, where his maternal grandfather's relatives—the Comins and Fionnes—reside. They have not, to my mind, improved my son.”

With these words Captain Barnulph retired, and from thenceforth avoided speaking of either Therese or Nial.

A few months after, accompanied by his daughter, he arrived at the castle.

CHAPTER V.

LADY BARNULPH received her son a second time, returning to his native land in the deep sorrow of a widower ; and his exquisitely lovely daughter with the utmost affection ; sympathizing in their mourning, which they still wore, she spared no effort of kindness or liberality to cheer their spirits.

With Eve, wild, romantic, poetic, this was an easy matter. The old castles elevated on the rugged rocks, the mystic

views of the Druidical altars, the gnarled oaks of centuries past, the fire-proofs of persecution which marked the towers of the castle, the extensive view over the border, the clear flowing river, the encircling trout stream; the pasture grounds with their herds and flocks, bounded by heath-clothed mountains purpling in the distance, and capped with the deeply-shaded clouds ;—formed a scene most grand and imposing, and quite novel to this daughter of an orient clime. Such scenes her father had described to her when speaking of England, and in imagination she strove to embody them ; but their sober, impressive gloom, differing so from the bright heaven-lighted east, far surpassed her expectations,—and she experienced the delights of novelty—a rare pleasure.

Of all these charms, to the girl not yet

seventeen, and who had moved in such a narrow circle, Therese, her sister, was the dearest. Nearly three years her senior, she had budded into the full proportions of womanhood, and was fully entitled to be termed very pretty—even handsome.

Therese was rather above the middle size, of delicate, though rounded proportions—a brunette; her skin was of a rich, soft, clear brown, relieved by a glowing complexion of that transparent scarlet which peculiarly belongs to a brunette; her eyes, so large, dark, and languishing, had been beautiful but for the affectation which destroyed their effect, for every look was studied to give meaning to the passion or sentiment Therese at the moment assumed. Captain Barnulph was correct when he said there was not a touch of nature or truth in her composition. Her lips, though rather thin, were well

formed, and her teeth pure as orient pearl.

Eve was perfectly enchanted with Therese's beauty and accomplishments ; the more so, because they came on her by surprise,—personal charms being a subject to which her parents, from their mode of life, had seldom referred. Mrs. Barnulph, while she tenderly watched over the health of an only child, in the unhealthy climate of Bombay ("the grave of the English"), never wasted a thought on Eve's beauty ; and probably departed this life unconscious of the hazel shade of her eyes or hair. Here was another novelty for Eve, Therese's incessant theme being beauty, dress to adorn it, and accomplishments to give it effect ; and as personal vanity is a seed of rapid growth in the female heart, no doubt—had not her character soon displayed

itself—Eve's nobler mind and views might soon have been tainted by the empty frivolity of the heiress's insatiable vanity.

A month glided by, during which Eve's fancy continued to shed the *couleur de rose* over her sister's character, whom she positively loved, with a sincerity and candour which not only blinded her to Therese's selfishness, but led her to place faith in her professions of a mutual affection ; for while the latter, amidst her great wealth and heaps of bijouterie of every description, was covetous to meanness, Eve, liberal and warm-hearted, presented to her treasures of Indian ornaments and toys ; for these she did not even receive the tribute of sincere thanks—certainly there was no lack of professions of gratitude ; for such was the selfish egotism of this spoiled child of prosperity, that she deemed herself entitled to every

kindness ;—and the heiress was too great a personage, in her own opinion, to consider any return beyond thanks necessary to her *poor* sister.

With all Therese's self-sufficiency, she could not be blind to the graceful elegance of Eve's form, and the beaming loveliness of her intelligent countenance ; but there her approbation ended, being incompetent to do justice to her sister's truthfulness and high moral feeling. Therese's mind was so distorted by affectation, that she positively despised Eve for her simplicity and straightforwardness.

A month had glided by, and Therese began to be ennuied with Eve's company. The latter was no flatterer, and having once expressed admiration of her sister, never returned to the subject, though she loved her more and more. Then, to the great

annoyance of her father, she had given all her pretty things to Therese, so she had no more to present ;—added to this, the exaltation of her spirit, her poetic love of nature, were actually repellent to Therese, who under the glitter of her affectation had a very homely mind, it having been so early demoralized by the unqualified flattery of her teachers ; so, in sincerity, she viewed Eve as a weak, romantic, tiresome girl, and gradually drew off to her old habit of companionship with servants,—her present one being a coarse, Dutch-built, bony, red-haired Scotch girl, who, from an inferior position in the household of Barnulph, had, by the grossest flattery, wormed herself into the favouritism of Therese, who made her the confidant of all her grievances, for the capricious heiress positively delighted in having something to complain of.

If ever a person was satiated with indulgences, it was Therese. Nature and fortune had lavished on her their most prized gifts ; she was literally encircled with prosperity, and from this excess of happiness sprang a rather unusual whim ; she positively wished for a grievance, something to complain of, to draw forth a rich tide of sympathies for her sad fate ; in short, she would be a heroine, an object of more profound interest than mere wealth could awaken in her favour ;—such was the unnatural result, emanating from an excess of morbid vanity.

This seeking after a grief led Therese into the wildest extravagance ; she struggled to turn the most trivial event into a scene, delighted when she could institute a quarrel with any of her friends, that she might sob out her cruel fate on the bosom of Lady Barnulph,

who, blinded by habit and affection, could see no fault in her darling grandchild. It was, however, to her abigail that Therese now frequently flew for consolation under these self-sought vexations.

Then there was no end to her secrets, which were just as imaginary as her griefs. One instance of Therese's vanity, as it subsequently led to important results, we shall here relate.

Some twenty miles from the Castle resided the Honourable Mr. Strangely, son and heir of a baron. He was about forty, a regular sportsman, supposed to prefer sylvan recreations to the softer charms of Eve's fair daughters. He had always visited at the Castle, but from the period of Captain Barnulph's arrival had been more attentive; and, as the latter was pleased with his honest countenance and lively manners, they grew intimate.

Therese from childhood had been considered mistress of the Castle, and the Honourable 'Squire always denominated her his pocket Venus, his Hebe ; she must fill his grace cup, and deep was the draught he quaffed to her health, and sound the slumber which followed, undisturbed by the twitches of the saucy boy Cupid. Now all this passed as trifling, until Captain Barnulph and the 'Squire's intimacy. Then Therese's vanity and love of scenic effect rose to a climax ; working herself up into a tragic air (most comic to the beholders), she would clasp her hands, and with floods of tears exclaim—

“ Oh, Eve, compassionate my fate, I see it all. Mr. Strangly loves me—has long loved me ; he saw plainly that I returned not his passion—my soul shrinks from his coarseness—alas ! my spirit is too refined for

earth, oh, that I were dead! then, Eve, my father—oh, cruel father!—might be content, for you, his beloved daughter, would be heiress!”

“ Dear Therese, I do not understand what you mean : explain—you terrify me.”

“ Yes, Eve, my sister, certain of your pity, hear my sad fate. I know it—I feel it—Mr. Strangly has proposed for me to my father.”

“ Well, dear Therese, you have but to express your objection to the union ; has my father urged you to accept a man you do not love ? if so, how unlike his general bearing.”

Interrupting her, Therese said, “ Excuse me, Eve, you are so dull ; I only surmise, from observation, that Mr. Strangly has proposed, and that my father will use undue influence to hurry me—child of the ill-fated

Neno Davales—on to a union I hate—another hysterical sigh—I guess my father's motive. Mr. Strangly is immensely rich, he will purchase me from my cruel father, miserable me! Well, I shall not long survive, then you, Eve, will be the heiress. Oh, may you enjoy the happiness of which cruel friends and excessive sensibility deprive me!"

With a calm sternness, but a brow flushed in anger, Eve chided her sister for speaking in such a manner of their mutual parent. Surprised, indignant at the liberty, but still not forgetting the deceit by which she worked out her ends, Therese obtained Eve's promise not to reveal what had just passed between them. The promise was frankly made; then Therese set off to her abigail to tell her fears—her misery—the harshness of her sister, envious, of course, of the heirship. To all these woes the dependant lent

a patient ear, carefully gleaning all the intelligence she could acquire, and then soothing her mistress by the grossest flattery, and by encouraging her in evil principles.

This was the first coolness between the sisters, so dissimilar in every respect. These outbreaks of Therese, followed by caresses to those she abused, began to develop her insincerity to Eve, though they could not lessen her affection. On the other hand, Therese was encouraged by her servant to view her sister with suspicion, and to be jealous of the preference Captain Barnulph shewed her; and thus, though to outward seeming all was the same, a change had passed over the sisters' confidential intimacy.

CHAPTER VI.

IN less than two months after Captain Barnulph's arrival at the Castle, Nial reached it; he came from the west of Ireland. Except his father, none of the party had ever before seen him.

In height he was about five feet nine, of powerful proportions; his wide, angular shoulders and sinewy limbs conveyed the idea of a pugilist; his face in its proportions and features was undoubtedly handsome, but the boldness of his large dark eyes, the

ready laugh which ever hovered round his mouth, and his reckless air, rendered the expression unfavourable. All felt that Nial Barnulph was a fearless man, possessed of a strong arm to punish his foe, and of a ready, caustic wit to wound the spirit which dared offend him, or crush the heart which opposed his wishes. At least such was the impression Eve received of her brother on their first meeting; and his manner was by no means calculated to remove the displeasing sentiment. On their introduction Therese got up one of her tragic scenes, threw herself on his bosom, wept, pouring forth a torrent of words, all expressive of her misery at being an heiress, but hoping that as they were the sole children of the hapless Neno Davales, he would support her, in her misery. Happily no one but Eve was present, and her cheeks glowed with shame at this expo-

sure of her sister's folly ; she perceived that Nial had difficulty in restraining his laughter, for his under-lip quivered, and his dark eyes gleamed with ridicule through their long lashes, but he did, for a few moments, command himself. Quitting Therese's embrace, he advanced to Eve, and with a bold stare observed—

“ Are you not too my sister ? how then comes it that in place of getting up a fine scene, you stand there blushing and dignified, with your eyes fixed on me ? I have it ; while Therese plans an oration to my honour, you mean to take my portrait : let it be full-length—thus.”

He threw himself into a fine gladiatorial position, his face assuming such a droll expression that Eve burst into laughter, in which he heartily joined, while Therese felt mortified and offended.

On perceiving this, Nial slapped her back, exclaiming,

“Nonsense, my Melpomene ! don’t look so sullen : the fact is, I am dark from Cuba’s burning suns, so, by no ablution could ever be turned into a swan, else I would consecrate myself to the daughter of the hapless Neno Davales,” mimicking Therese’s manner, who, overpowered with mortification, rushed from the apartment. In one half hour the keen perception of Nial had discovered Therese’s disposition, which it took the more amiable Eve weeks even to suspect ; and the suspicion of her sister’s affection was so painful, that she accused herself of unkindness in admitting the belief.

A few evenings after, a large party being expected to the Castle, Nial entered the saloon and joined his sisters, who, according to the fashion of the day, were elegantly dressed :

with his hands stuck into his pockets, after a whistle, he said, boldly staring at them both, which brought a deep flush into Eve's face, and an am-not-I-pretty? expression into Therese's.

“No doubt you are both fine girls, and no mistake; but, by my faith! I have known one, ay, and loved her too, who, though not so finely rigged out, was so much handsomer, that, with all your adornments, you are not fit to hold a candle to her.”

“Hold a candle to her!” reiterated Therese, with surprise; “what can that mean?”

“Oh!” he replied, with a burst of laughter, “merely a genteel way we have of speaking in the comparative, in the ould kingdom of Connaught; mum for that—not a hint that I had a vourneen. Now for my toilette! for through the ancient corridor I hear the lady of the castle approach,

announced by a most unharmonious sneeze."

He ran off laughing, in which he was joined by Eve.

Wound Therese's inordinate vanity, and she lost her temper ; provoked that Nial had acknowledged having seen a person more beautiful in his estimation than herself, she experienced almost dislike to him, and said,—

"Eve, how can you laugh at that buffoon?—the vulgar wretch ! I blush to think that he is our brother ; and though my father dislikes me, he should rejoice that, by deed of settlement, such a rude person as Nial is excluded from the heirship. I would rather set fire to the Castle than see him its chief." She spoke passionately, and without affectation.

Eve was going to reply, when Therese

uttered a scream, for, with a look almost demoniacal in its expression of mockery and of rage, Nial stood before the startled girls.

Addressing Therese, he sneeringly observed,—

“Indeed ! that’s the way you speak, after all your professions and scenes of exaggerated sentiments of affection towards me, ‘Son of the hapless Neno Davales !’ Did you think that your tragic airs could for a moment impose upon me ? And now it appears you consider me a vulgar wretch, unworthy to rule at Barnulph !”


Here his manners changed from mockery to violence ; he grasped the terrified Therese by the wrist, as he fiercely said,—

“Now, mark me—vulgar I may be !—unlucky from the hour of my birth I have been ; but, by all the saints in heaven ! inherit the broad lands of Barnulph I will,

though I barter my soul's weal for their possession. Woman! do you consider me a driveller, to suppose that I shall resign my right as the first-born son, because an old dotard, apostate, rebellious chief, out of vengeance on his sons—for being loyal to their king—cut off the male heirs of his ancient race, the unnatural deed sanctioned by that madman, Oliver Cromwell, and confirmed, forsooth! by that prince of lies and libertinism, Charles the Second, all, no doubt, in justice to their aiding and abetting the vindictive old chief in his revenge against his sons for being loyal to their king and to their faith? Well, see the punishment that has followed the abettors of this illegal act. Neither the puritan-preaching protector, nor the libertine king, has now any of his descendants on the throne of England,—the just decree of the Fates."

Therese sunk back in a chair. Eve, trembling, leant against the mantel-piece. Nial eyed them both, and then, in the mocking, sneering way, more repellent than even his violence, said,—

“Therese, I will give you a grief ready cut and dry ; when my father departs this life, I mean to dispute every acre of Barnulph with you, by fair means or foul means,—so cast off your heiress airs and hopes to the winds ; for know, that though not patriarchal in any other way, I am a true disciple of Abraham, on the rights of the first-born male heir ; and who shall dare to set aside a law upheld for ages by the habits and laws of nations, sanctioned by Deity ? So, by hook or by crook—there is another touch of Connaught gentility for you—I shall win my birthright, and there is another ready to pop after me ; so, though no seer, I foretell that the present



dame of the Castle shall be its last heiress. Now for my toilette !” and whistling, he retired, leaving Therese actually sobbing with anger at his insulting threats.

Eve experienced a deeper sensation. From the day of Nial's arrival at the castle, the expression of his countenance had revolted her, there was so much of sneering, mocking recklessness in it ; and in his manner, and from the period of this conversation, she formed the belief that he would be a source of much contention and unhappiness to his family. Still, when he pleased, there was so much playfulness in his manner, that it removed the impression of his being a person of deep motives. It appeared as if his words proceeded from a gay, thoughtless temper, incapable of serious reflection, and that his actions resulted from momentary impulses. It was not so ; there

was method in his levity, though, from his exuberant spirits, he oft indulged in the frolics and pranks befitting a school-boy, and seemed a very child in his playfulness.

Little past three and twenty when he first met his sisters, a life of peculiar habits and of change, united to a neglected education and the conflicting principles and faith of his family, had early obliged Nial to think and act for himself; in effect, while still a youth, he had acquired more experience than during a long life most men attain; and by nature he possessed a quick perception of character.

Nial was indisputably vulgar. On this he lauded himself, as it excused much of his boldness, which else could not have been overlooked. As ladies cast a restraint on his coarseness, he shunned their society, but sought recompense among the lovely of

lower degree, and to men in general he proved a delightful companion—being first-rate at all the sylvan sports. Then the 'squires voted him the best rough rider in Christendom, one capable of breaking-in a filly scouring over its native plains; besides, Nial understood the difficult art of horse-shoeing,—always shod his own steeds, and had the good taste to object to the ruling fashion of nicking horses' tails, and cropping their ears, at the period so general.

This knowledge of horses recommended Nial to the hunting 'squires of his acquaintance; and while they swore lustily to his superior sporting acquirements, they found him a first-rate boon companion, for he sung with humour and in good taste; then his conversation was replete with anecdote, enlivened by repartee and scandal, spiced

with double entendre, puns, and sarcasms ; in short, Nial Barnulph was *au fait* at the converse which during his time formed the amusement of the country gentlemen of England, and of its sister isle, when a joke was a joke, even though it outraged modesty or scoffed at the most sacred subjects ; and a witticism was received with uproarious merriment, even though it ridiculed the weakness or misfortunes of a friend and intimate.

To these convivial qualifications Nial united those of a knowing jockey ; he was well known at the Derby, the Oaks, and at Ascot, still more famous at the Curragh in Ireland, and betted largely ; woe to those who dared to glance at his honour, for he was a successful duellist, as two fatal instances in which he had been engaged proved, and of these he boasted ; worse again, Nial was a

wassailer in his cups ; and when under the influence of the rosy god, treated popery as a superstition emanating from the ruins of a gorgeous paganism, and protestantism as a heresy.

How, indeed, could his gentlemanly father, or inexperienced sisters, comprehend the character of one who, under a gay exterior, the ready promoter of each light pleasure, with a good humour which seemed indomitable, disguised a recklessness of crime and a cold, scheming, calculating, selfishness, which never for a moment overlooked its own advancement by yielding sympathy to others ? The world was Nial's oyster, which he would open for his own advantage, though it led to the ruin of his most intimate acquaintances. Of friendship he was incapable ; still, a temper naturally haughty, and strong passions, had sometimes conquered his worldly

wisdom. These were rare occasions ; and as he himself coarsely remarked, if he fell into a puddle he knew how to jump out of it, and cared little if some of the dirt stuck to him ; still, Nial Barnulph was a popular man.

Altogether he was a compound of caprice ; one time he would be unbearably haughty and over-bearing to the domestics, then, as whim directed, treat them as intimates. There was no kindness in this, or consideration, merely a refinement of despotism ; he viewed inferiors as tools to be taken up or cast down at pleasure. He had a habit of whistling, in which he greatly excelled ; it was his wont, when walking either in the house or about the grounds, to thrust his hands into his pockets, his hat knowingly cocked on the left side, his shoulders squared, his whole appearance rakish ; then, as he strutted, he would whistle and sing alternately some

opera or ballad, it might be the Cid in Spanish, or the Beggar's Opera in English, or some French chanson ; and he never missed a note, his ear was so perfect. As to his humour, it was irresistible ; the gravest, the sternest, could not help being amused even when they disapproved. While Nial was thus occupied, nothing interrupted him ; company might come and go, his horses neigh, his dogs bark, his friends entreat ; until the piece commenced was concluded, nothing could attract or interrupt him. At this very time, Nial was labouring under difficulties that must have crushed almost any other spirit ; but he supported himself by wild schemes of gaining the heirship of Barnulph.

His chief delight was in teasing Therese, whom he particularly disliked as the heiress, so he resolved to make a display of her affectation whenever an opportunity offered.

The result of his scheme, however, disappointed himself, and grieved Eve.

He had urged his Irish groom to make love to Therese's red-haired abigail ; Paddy desired no better fun, and the damsel, being nothing loth, betrayed all her mistress's secrets, particularly the dear young lady's misery lest a cruel father should oblige her to marry the Honourable Mr. Strangly (then Baron Strangly, by his father's demise). Now Nial had a strong suspicion that to be a titled lady was Therese's ambition ; besides, Baron Strangly had a magnificent place and large fortune ; but, to the horror of the heiress, the Baron proposed to Captain Barnulph for Eve, who unhesitatingly declined the offer. She considered herself too young to marry, and far preferred a residence in the East ; and her father, who shuddered at the idea of returning to Bombay unaccom-

panied by this, his amiable child, expressed pleasure at her refusal; and which of a truth Baron Strangly received very philosophically.

Not so Nial—he was quite furious, insolently so; he wished for the match, not from any anxiety about Eve's settlement; but Strangly's house with his race-horses, his stud—one of the best in England—his pack of beagles, and extensive park, situated in a fine sporting neighbourhood, would have been such a pleasant lounge one half of the year. Then Strangly was just the open-hearted fellow Nial could have wound round his finger, and Eve, so gentle and timid, could be frightened into anything. It was very provoking.

As some compensation, Nial recommenced teasing Therese,—betrayed all her maid had told the groom of her fears of being obliged to wed Baron Strangly. Nothing could

equal her indignation : the abigail was dismissed. Lady Barnulph told Nial he must either quit, or act as a gentleman. All that was fair enough ; but the brunt of the business fell upon Eve.

Baron Strangly's preference for her sister was the first blow to Therese's vanity. Viewing her as a rival, she positively, for the time being, hated her ; so painfully mortifying to see an ignorant, penniless girl, preferred to her, an accomplished heiress. It was passing strange, and as wounding as strange.

Suddenly, some business, that he did not explain, hurried Nial back to Ireland. His adieux to his sisters were frank and playful. There was some apology to Eve for past unkindness. To the dame of the castle, and his father, he was affectionate, and they acted liberally by him.

Two months after Nial's departure from



the castle, Captain Barnulph and Eve left for India. The latter rejoiced in going ; her ideal of family unity and sisterly affection had been disappointed. A brother's and a sister's jealousy had cruelly drawn aside the glittering veil her unsophisticated and lofty mind had cast over the domestic circle ; the bitter fruit of contemptible envyings and heart-burnings which they had forced on her knowledge, left a sting not easily removed ; and in bidding her adieux, while she wept with sorrow on the bosom of her kind grandmother, who had been so considerably affectionate in her attentions, she rejected with scorn Therese's maudling, false assurances of regret and never-ending attachment, poured forth with a sentimental air of affectation.

Therese wept as the carriage drove off. Eve's society was a loss not easily replaced ;

still, in her self-deception, she accused her of selfishness and cold-heartedness, in not regretting their separation. Then the heiress considered that Eve had displayed more pride in her resentment than one so unaccomplished and portionless was entitled to. The fact was, Therese had misjudged her sister's character, and imputed her timidity, which was the result of her parent's sternness, to want of spirit; whereas Eve was not deficient, even at the early age of seventeen, in either moral or physical courage. A more unselfish, generous, earnest being than Eve Barnulph, it were impossible to find. Her darkest trait was, an unforgiving temper; she never resented an injury; but, like all sensitive persons, she keenly suffered from a sense of injury, and found it almost impossible to forget premeditated insults, such as her sister had offered.

CHAPTER VII.

OH! how Eve's young heart throbbed with joy at again finding herself amidst the hills of Bombay, her pleasant home, surrounded by familiar objects, resuming former occupations, and once more attended by the devoted dark beings, who, though despised by most of the European nations, had ever gained her preference. The East was not only the land of Eve's birth and early habits, but it suited her tastes. She had tried England,

and found it wanting in the enthusiasm and disinterestedness of her romantic hopes ; and, save for the loss of her departed mother, she would now have been perfectly happy ; for her father, pleased at her noble generosity in refusing Baron Strangly—to whom, if she experienced no preference, she felt no dislike—rather than separate from him, became more than usually cheerful and attentive.

Still, whenever Eve spoke despondingly of her sister's unkindness, he gently reasoned,—that, having imbibed the enthusiasm of oriental poetry, she had fallen into the common error of all enthusiasts—that of raising her hopes of human sympathies too high, shedding the roseate, unreal lights of imagination over downright realities. However, caressingly, he would add, “ It was a girlish mistake, which mostly, if not always, vanishes with one's teens.”

“At all events, dear papa,” she would exclaim, “one mistake has been removed ; England is no longer my ideal ; and, oh ! that strangers, not near relations, had been the first to open my view to the fierce passions, and trifling pursuits, and, still more repellent, the graspings after distinction and notoriety, which perfectly make me shudder at my own nature.”

“Ah ! my Bombay girl,” he replied, laughing, “I fear that you have entered into the feeling of a Hindoo Rajah, who, being told, by way of clemency, that his crimes should be judged by his friends, prostrating himself, he exclaimed, ‘Oh ! in Allah’s name, most potent prince, let me be judged by my enemies.’ Friends or relations know no mercy. However, darling, right glad am I that here we are at home, enjoying the bright sun and palm groves of this villa.”

Eve was now placed at the head of the establishment ; and Captain Barnulph, no longer checked by his wife's economy or ill-health, indulged in his love of hospitality and company. Among others admitted into his company was a lieutenant of the ———, then quartered in Bombay.

Zied Nesmond had brought letters of introduction from the Campbells, and these were sufficient to ensure his welcome ; and in these letters it was mentioned, that, though holding a commission in the British army, the Lieutenant was the descendant of a distinguished French family of Languedoc.

Zied Nesmond seemed the very embodiment of an enthusiastic girl's ideal of perfection, and there was a romance connected with his family which created interest. In the first instance, merely to say that the Lieutenant was good-looking, would not be

doing justice—he was positively handsome. In height rather above five feet ten, of a graceful, though dignified form, he excelled in all manly pursuits—archery, fencing, swimming, tennis, rackets, and in dancing, riding, and music ; of the latter he was extremely fond ; but military exercises and hopes of promotion in his profession were his chief aim, until introduced to the Barnulphs.

The Campbells—as before remarked—had said that Lieutenant Nesmond was descended from a family of distinction in Lower Languedoc, but probably they were not aware that Zied had Arab blood, of which he was justly proud—his great grandmother (widow of Elias Rae Nesmond) was an Arabian lady of the noble house of Korish, and lineally descended from the prophet Mahomet ; it is needless to add that the family of Korish for ages had been remarkable for personal beauty.

Of this every one acquainted with Persian poetry must be aware ; and this intermixture of Arab blood with the Cevenals was by no means, in past days, uncommon ; for the Arabs, in their mercantile speculations, frequented the shores of the gulf of Lyons, and, as a consequence, formed unions with the youths of both sexes, in Lower Languedoc.

It might be from this mixed ancestry, that Zied Nesmond was so peculiar in his beauty ; for though we love not to apply the term beauty to one of his sex, he was worthy of being a model for the Grecian Apollo.

* * * *

Lieutenant Nesmond soon became the *habitué* of the villa, and for six months few days elapsed without his presence, and these seemed so dreary to all its inhabitants ;



alas! to poor Eve he had become the first and dearest, almost equally welcome to Captain Barnulph; and the varied complexioned household uttered an exclamation of pleasure, as, mounted on his Arabian steed Malex, the barb, as he called it, in all the flush of youthful spirits, he dashed lightly down the avenue. Then commenced some gay recreation, simple, still intellectual, Zied's talent for music and execution on several instruments was in itself a constant source of enjoyment; then he was fond of the culture of flowers as Eve herself, and delighted in the wild strains of oriental poetry; no exaggeration of passion to those who then, though unconfessed, so ardently loved each other.

At the expiration of the six months, though not daring to hope for success, urged on by uncontrollable passion, Zied pro-

posed for Eve. There was no refusal in the deep blushes, the downcast eyes, the throbbing bosom of the timid girl, though the tongue denied speech ; and Captain Barnulph, who esteemed the Lieutenant with a father's interest, frankly, in his manly, off-hand way, gave his consent.

That very evening, though little doubting his daughter's attachment to Zied Nesmond, Captain Barnulph apprised the blushing girl of his proposal ; pressing her hand affectionately, he said, " Eve, you will be the salvation of this most interesting youth, far too ardent, confiding, and generous to be left to his own guidance : but, loving you to excess, my darling, I trust that you will be his guardian angel."

She stammered forth some indistinct words of affection for Zied, then would have thanked her father ; but putting his hand

playfully on her mouth, he thus commanded silence, as he proceeded to speak.

“ Happily there is no disparity of years, as would have been, had you married Baron Strangly. Admitting that a man at the wrong side of forty might, for the time being, prove an agreeable companion to the wife, scarcely seventeen ; still, my love, when he reached the sombre age of sixty, and you but seven and thirty, the very prime of life, the disparity in habits and disposition of necessity must be great, and the yielding all one’s views and tastes at the dictates of duty to another, though very laudable, may prove confoundedly disagreeable ; and, if I am not much mistaken, having honourable tacked to your name, or being mistress of a fine house and park, would be a poor compensation for affection, mutual tastes, and confidence ; and for this cause I rejoiced at

your not accepting of Strangely, who, in the world's opinion, would have been a far better match."

Eve laughed gaily, readily agreeing to all her father advanced.

"So far we agree, then," he observed, smiling; "but now I fear that I shall disenchant you, and appear most anti-romantic to the young lovers. Alas! for our grosser nature, however spiritualized, we cannot live without the creature comforts; eating, drinking, sleeping, shelter, are absolutely necessary, for Dame Nature is imperative in her demands —(patting her cheeks). Say, is not your father a common-place mortal to admit such considerations true? Fair daughter, still attend to vulgar common-places.

"My grandfather, one way or another, managed to dive largely into debt, and his noble-minded daughter, (my mother,) though not

bound to the act, resolved to pay his creditors to the utmost farthing ; and this, with her extensive charities, and the state she considered due to the castle, has given her no opportunity for saving. Her allowance to me has been limited ; out of my means, I have acted liberally to my son, for I pity Nial, a victim from infancy to the passions of others—he will also be heir to the little I may have to dispose of. To you, Eve, I give two thousand pounds ; and, on leaving the castle, your grandmother told me that she meant to give you five ; so, one way or another, you and Zied will be independent ; what more does youth and love require ?”

* * * *

The arrangements for a union so blissful in perspective, were soon concluded. Captain Barnulph wrote to announce the event to Lady Barnulph, and claim the promised por-

tion for Eve, and Zied addressed two rich uncles on the subject. His presence, however, in Scotland relative to settlements, also to interest his uncles in purchasing a troop for him, was absolutely necessary; so he obtained leave of absence.

Captain Barnulph arranged that, as soon as he had settled with his uncles, Zied should proceed to Castle Barnulph, to pay his respects to its lady; and on hearing of this, Eve, whose angry feelings of disappointment had dissolved before the sun of the glorious happiness she then experienced, and being aware of Therese's love of finery and toys, with a generosity bordering on extravagance, sent her, by Zied, numerous presents, persuading her father to add a magnificent cashmere; and with these Eve wrote a sisterly letter, expressing a hope that they might soon meet in affection and hap-

piness. After her short experience and bitter disappointment, Eve's young heart still expected sympathy and truth, more especially from relatives.

Under the brightest hopes of being again reunited within a few months, and to be partners for life, the betrothed parted.

Zied was inexpressibly dear to Eve—she wept at uttering her farewells; but putting the most perfect confidence in his affection, for “perfect love casteth out fear,” she made no vows of constancy, required none; she would as soon have thought it necessary to say, “Zied, when you return to Bombay the sun shall still shed light, or the air freshen the earth;” as “Zied, when you return you shall love me, and I will love you.” That it should be otherwise seemed impossible—out of nature—Alas!

CHAPTER VIII.

ZIED NESMOND was gone—the wild waters rolled between him and Eve. Still she felt no depression, all around her being replete with his memory ; and her father frequently spoke of the Lieutenant with affectionate approbation, and congratulated her on the prospect of being his bride. How, at these remarks, her heart bounded with joy ; how bright in hope this perspective of happiness founded on love and inexperience ; not

a shade of doubt or fear flitted over the gentle girl's spirit, and cheerfully she resumed the employments Zied's gay, fascinating humour had taught her to neglect.


To while away her lover's absence, Eve set about carving and inlaying a set of drinking cups, also furniture for a dressing-case, out of different sized cocoa-nuts. She excelled in these arts, which she had learned from an old Gentoo, a favourite domestic of Captain Barnulph's; and her father promised to have them lined with crystal, and set in chased silver, so as to render them worthy of Zied's acceptance.

What joy when the European mails arrived! Zied's letter to Captain Barnulph was most satisfactory, while Eve received a journal, showing that since parting she had engrossed all his thoughts. The last page was directed from Castle Barnulph, where

he had arrived the preceding evening. He wrote to say that his uncles, flattered by the connection he was forming, had acted most liberally, particularly Sir James Nesmond, the bachelor. He had also been promised a commission for Nial ; so Captain Barnulph should write at once, to apprise his son to be in readiness.

Letters also came from Therese. The one to Eve full of kindness, insisting that her beloved, charming sister should accept the wedding garment from her, who regretted she could not be present to act as bridesmaid. Oh ! how sisterly ; and Eve blushed, and even wept, at her own suspicions, and want of love to this amiable sister. Lady Barnulph's letter, though less flattering in professions, was full of sterling value, both in opinion and in liberality.

With the letters came numerous presents



Zied had bought for Eve—as far as his means extended, everything he considered worthy of her acceptance ; and not one of the household was forgotten. This Captain Barnulph liked, as it showed respect and consideration for the humbler classes ; so he summoned them all up to the saloon, to present the gifts, and then, for the first time, mentioned that his daughter was to be the bride of Zied Nesmond. Such wild glee as the communication conveyed to the heterogeneous set ; they burst into laughter, clapping of hands, grimacing, skipping about like monkeys in their delight, embracing each other. All this was absurd, but so very happy—to Eve gloriously so.

No leisure now, or calmness, for carving the cocoas—(happily, those intended for Zied were exquisitely finished). In consequence of the fortunes of the parties coming

from Zied's uncle and Lady Barnulph, the settlements were to be prepared and signed in England, so that nothing should be required except Captain Barnulph's and the lover's signatures, in Bombay, on the morning of the union; and Zied expected to leave in the Tigris, then anchored at Portsmouth, but under orders to bear government despatches to India. Here was excitement; the Tigris probably had already sailed. Eve's spirits were in a flutter; her father laughed at the blunders she every moment committed; she was obliged to laugh at them herself. Still the trousseau was to be prepared; for Captain Barnulph had promised Zied not to trifle with his happiness, but to have the ceremony to unite him and Eve Barnulph for ever, performed within the week of his return to Bombay.

Captain Barnulph took his daughter to Bombay for a few weeks. Now that he was on the eve of consigning her to another, he clung to her with painful tenacity. Every evening Eve wandered down to the bay ; where, sitting on some jutting rock, with straining eyes she gazed in the direction the Tigris should come.

The winds had proved propitious ; the Tigris, with all her sails spread, sailed gallantly into the fine bay. Captain Barnulph stood on the beach, in pleased expectation to receive Zied Nesmond. Fastidious to sensitiveness in his opinions of female delicacy, he did not approve of Eve accompanying him ; so, with throbbing bosom, she remained at the residence, impatiently watching the arrival of her lover—her betrothed.

Zied Nesmond was not on board the Tigris, and, more vexatious still, no English

letters for the Barnulphs. Though disappointed, Captain Barnulph experienced no uneasiness, beyond sympathy for his daughter.

“My love,” he observed, “no doubt but that Zied, so ardent and devoted in his attachment, is more impatient and annoyed than either you or I. Of course, the delay originates in these lawyers, proverbially tedious, not having concluded the settlements; consequently, the whole grievance is combined in a couple of months’ delay, perhaps less. So cheer up, my girl, and to-morrow we may as well return to the villa, until Zied’s arrival; its mountain air best suits you.”

Eve readily entered into her father’s views; she was disappointed, but neither angry nor suspicious; however, a naturally sanguine temperament had been nourished by the glowing climate of the East, and for

the last few days she had been in a state of nervous excitement, expecting Captain Nesmond's arrival. Hopes, blushes, all buried in her heart, for, alas ! poor Eva had no mother, sister, or female friend to sympathize in her thoughts, or support her under what must prove a trial,—the solemnity of marriage, undoubtedly, excepting death, being the greatest epoch in a woman's life.

Not to depress her father, she struggled to be cheerful, and to go through the everyday duties with equal composure. The struggle was too much ; better had she wept over disappointment ; for, towards evening, she was seized by a succession of fainting fits, and then sunk into a stupor. Here we shall relate, in her own words, as subsequently described by herself to Mrs. Dalzell, a lady to whom, in the course of

our narrative, we shall introduce our readers,
—a rather strange hallucination :—

“ Mrs. Dalzell, although apparently in a stupor, and unequal to move—or speak, in short, as I subsequently learned—except for my faint breathing, apparently dead—I was conscious of a strange internal struggle, as if the spirit had departed from its tenure of clay. My eyes were closed, my hands clenched ; for a moment I seemed enveloped in profound darkness. Then a vision rose, clear, perfect, unmistakeable to my view. I wandered through the grounds of Castle Barnulph, which rose in its gloomy grandeur to the sight, and pursued my way by the meandering rivulet, which leads to a root house, or bower, shaded by ancient elms ; it had been my favourite resort, and there I beheld seated, in deep converse, Zied Nesmond, my betrothed, and Therese, the

heiress. Oh! how exquisitely lovely she looked, in the subdued light of the declining evening. In soft, full folds, like Grecian drapery, fell over her graceful form a veil of Indian muslin, wrought with gold thread;—it had been my gift. No art had been spared to display the finely rounded proportions of her full form; her hair and beating bosom were ornamented with natural flowers of delicate perfume. The two lovers, such they were, seemed to speak with earnestness. Then Therese's cheeks glowed and dimpled, and she rested on Zied's bosom. Traitor!—false to me his so lately ardently sought for—and no doubt he poured into Therese's ears the honied words which had won my virgin heart! Oh! the agony of my spirit! though long in description, the vision did not last a moment. Scarcely had I identified

the form, when it dissolved in ether. But the impress of the evil knowledge was ineffaceable ; it extracted from my heart hope, and my trust in man."

* * * * *

Next day, Captain Barnulph and his daughter returned to the villa. Amidst its solitudes, Eve, now for the first time spurning society, reflected over the strange appearance which harassed her fancy ; of its truths she admitted no doubt. Vanity she knew to be Therese's master-passion ; this had been severely wounded by Baron Strangly's preference, and, in the spirit of a mean criminal rivalry of her, she resolved to win over Zied Nesmond. Endowed as he was with superior advantages, they could not inspire Therese with love, for she was incapable of loving any one ; she was too much self-engrossed for that.

“I am deficient,” mused Eve, “in all which most captivates man—music, flattery; and Therese dances better than I do. Then she is bold, and I am shy; and when she has a point to carry—I know by experience—will rush to the point, unchecked by timid fears; and Zied so often reproached me for being cold, and distant, and reserved, and blamed me for making the Gentoo girls accompany me in my father’s absence, though he knew that it was his command. Alas! I have lost the man I truly and devotedly loved.”

As might be expected, Eve’s health failed under this constant agitation. Though never suspecting her present jealousy, still Captain Barnulph, imputing her depression to disappointment, strove, by the tenderest and most unremitting attention, to soothe her.

Grateful for this kindness, she excited herself to appear cheerful ; when letters from Nial rendered her father, if possible, more wretched than herself.

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CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN BARNULPH had written to acquaint his son of Eve's engagement to Zied Nesmond. And now came Nial's answer, dated from St. Jagos, Cuba. It were tedious to enter into the particulars of an epistle so insolent and undutiful. It was written by Nial under the influence of grief and anger. Don Davales, supposed to be rich, through his nefarious peculations, died insolvent ; and at the very period Nial was arranging to go

with his son to Bombay, came his father's letter, enthusiastic in its praise of Zied, inspiring him with jealousy, as of necessity the Lieutenant and Eve would rule the roast at Bombay; so Nial, in his vulgar wrath, had termed it.

Subsequently, when he cooled, and found his affairs so desperate, he wrote a penitential letter to Captain Barnulph, demanding some money, and proposing to go with his wife and son to the Residence.

This still farther irritated his father; he forwarded the money, even more than Nial had requested; but solemnly declared that he would never receive him or his child.

The next English packet was expected by the following Friday or Saturday, when the mails would be due. It was then Monday, and on Thursday Captain Barnulph pro-

posed going to the Residence, to receive Captain Nesmond, of whose arrival he entertained no doubt. Eve was not to accompany her father, as a day would bring him and Zied to the villa.

In despite of Eve's vision, and her resolve to expect the worst, hope, deceptive hope, hovered in her heart ; and the blissful expectation of being united to Zied, after a few wise repulses, was at last admitted to take place in her bosom ; still, though excited and hopeful, she was sad and tremulous, incapable of exertion, her appetite gone, and her spirits at once fluttered and depressed.

It was Monday. Captain Barnulph and his daughter sat at breakfast, which was prepared in a wide balcony, facing a wood of palm trees ; the space between, a meadow, except just adjoining the balcony, which was

a small pleasure ground—Eve's peculiar care. An awning over the balcony kept off the glaring rays of the morning sun, and a curtain of parasitical plants sheltered it in front. Several small fountains were in play, their jets sparkling like precious stones ; and varied brilliant birds and flies, delighted with the morning's freshness, sported from tree to tree, or nestled in the flowers, pecking at the clustering petals, or sheltering beneath them ; there was a low buzz of insect life intermingling with the occasional notes of the birds, and the dashing of the fountains, and the zephyrs playing amidst the trees ; all around was harmony, and light, and joy, —gifts of a beneficent Creator, who, in mercy and goodness, presided over all—
“The works of His hands.”

Insensible to a scene which a few months previously would have awakened her to

joy, Eve sat by the untouched breakfast, her head resting on her hand ; Captain Barnulph looked over some periodicals, occasionally sipping his coffee. On the instant the old Gentoo domestic entered, a salver covered with letters in his hand, Captain Barnulph and his daughter simultaneously started up : the Gentoo looked wistfully at Eve, then said, " Master, the packet not expected from England for some days, reached this morning. Captain Nesmond has not arrived, but these have been forwarded." He laid the letters on the table, and hurried from the apartment.

Eve sunk back in the chair, and held a handkerchief to her face, to conceal the convulsive agony, at this fresh disappointment.

" Patience, my sweet child !" cried her father, in choking accents ; " no letters for

you, love ; but cheer up, darling of my soul! this probably explains, what he now,"—he had broken the seal and commenced reading, ere finishing the sentence. It might be five minutes, or less, when he uttered a cry, it was a yell, a howl—oh, God ! how fearfully it sounded.

Eve let the handkerchief fall, and sprung to her feet, but fell back, all but fainting, at the awful expression of her father's face : he was crushing a letter in his grasp, his eyes glared, then with a wild laugh he shrieked, "Eve ! are you not Eve ? My child, the villain Zied is married to your sister, the heiress ; and see, child, they have enclosed fire to consume my brain." He dashed down the letter with a shudder. "You too Eve, are on fire !" He grasped a vase full of flowers, dashed them over the then prostrate girl, and uttering fearful cries, fled towards the wood.

Eve Barnulph survived that scene, but she never after could allude to it—the reminiscence would have been too horrible.

* * * *

The next six weeks proved a blank in the memory of Captain Barnulph ; and now, indeed, his daughter's character shone forth in all its gentle goodness and perfect unselfishness ; to her indefatigable and judicious care, he owed the preservation of his intellect. In witnessing her father's sufferings her spirit rose more indignant against Zied than her own disappointment could have wrought her to. "Traitor to love ! worshipper of Mammon !" she thought ; "I may not degrade my sex's dignity by regretting him ; no, I rejoice at my escape ; blessed be the vision, which prepared me for a shock which else, by its unexpectedness, might have reduced me to

my father's state, and left me incapable of attending on him, now my only earthly hope."

The only account which reached them of Zied Nesmond's marriage with the heiress, was contained in the following brief, hurried letter from Lady Barnulph, bearing date,

" Castle Barnulph, February 29th.

" Harold, my son, you who under all disappointments have continued to be so inexpressibly dear to me, how can I convey the wounding, shameful intelligence? My hand trembles, my eyes weep, as I announce that Therese, my sweet innocent child, seduced by that vilest of men, Zied Nesmond, her sister's betrothed, has eloped to Scotland with him, where they (as I understand) have been united; but for *honour's* sake, I leave to night, ill and heartbroken as I feel, to see

the hateful ceremony of this detestable marriage at least legally performed: circumstances leave no choice between that and my poor Therese's disgrace.

“The knowledge of this elopement burst on me last evening with the force of an avalanche ; may God grant me grace to forgive the guilty man ! for through grace alone can I conquer my angry feelings. And you, my son, teach Eve to rejoice, not mourn, having escaped from such a villain ; her five thousand pounds are settled on her from this—at her full disposal. Dear girl, adieu ! I am scarcely equal to guide my pen, and the Leopard for Bombay sails within a few hours,

&c. &c. &c.”

This nearly illegible letter was the only account Captain Barnulph ever received of the disgraceful elopement; neither from

Zied nor Therese did any communication ever reach him.

Although within a few months Captain Barnulph had recovered from the severe attack of brain fever, his health was quite broken, and being unequal to the official duties of his appointment, he sent in his resignation. However, having been universally respected in his department, his superiors in office, with every demonstration of respect for his exemplary conduct, and regret for his fading health, granted a liberal retiring salary.

However, the Residence was no longer his, so he hired a handsome house in Bombay. England he would never again visit, lest, by any chance, he might be thrown in the way of Captain Nesmond or his bride. Constant amusement and company were ordered, as the best relief for the increasing de-

pression of mind. So, though labouring under these heavy griefs, Captain Barnulph and his daughter were to be found in every gay and festive scene, while their own saloons every Thursday were thrown open for the reception of distinguished guests.

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT thirteen months subsequent to Captain Barnulph's removing to a private residence in Bombay, Major Chudleigh Merton, of the ———, proposed to him for his daughter Eve.

Major Merton was a tall, handsome, soldierly-looking person, with marked, but finely cut features; his manners grave, sometimes haughty, particularly fastidious

in his ideas of women, and considered in his regiment as rather a martinet.

To say that the graceful, elegant Eve Barnulph captivated Major Merton, would faintly express the profound admiration, the ardent passion with which she inspired him ; and of this, until his proposal to her father, she remained in perfect ignorance—no wonder, as Chudleigh Merton rather watched than courted her ; and this, as it proved, was his only chance ; had he attempted to win her wounded heart at once, she had repelled his advances, and confided her past love for Zied, and which had never transpired. Even the Lieutenant's intimacy at the villa, had been from its seclusion unknown ; and when the match was broken off, though the whys or wherefores of the business were never explained to the household,

still they were commanded not to allude to the subject, and with them their master's order was law.

Some twelve or thirteen years Eve's senior, Major Merton, from his peculiar ideas, considered her as a mere child in experience, who consequently should be solely guided by her father : thus his proposal was to Captain Barnulph, not to Eve.

Captain Barnulph at once accepted the proposal ; in point of fact, Major Merton was a better *parti* for his daughter than Lieutenant Nesmond, being nephew to Lord Merton, and possessing a private fortune, sufficient for independence.

When the communication was made to Eve, it nearly filled her with despair ; positively, she could scarcely bring to her mind the form or manner of Major Merton. He, with others, had crowded round her at the

numerous entertainments at which she had been present ; but though she despised Zied Nesmond, and resolved never to waste a thought on such a cold, heartless calculating villain, still (in anger, we admit,) he engrossed her every thought.

“My child !” exclaimed Captain Barnulph, as pale, weeping, with clasped hands, she knelt before him, entreating that he would generously reject Major Merton’s suit, and let her for ever remain with him, as his support and comfort ; and he so much required, both, owing to his broken health—
“My child !” raising her in his arms, and actually sobbing on her shoulder, “darling of my broken heart, the one unfading light on my path of woe and tribulation ; oh ! that fearful curse ! Eve, my two other children have cast off their duty ; do not you, my child, fail me. Nay, I know what

you would plead, and selfishness would too readily gain my consent against our separation ; but, Eve, much as I grieve to alarm you—(she felt him shudder)—my physicians acknowledge that I have not long to live ; and were I gone, what would become of you, so young and inexperienced ?” His brow flashed and contracted, as he fiercely added, “ When I am gone, Eve, you will literally stand alone ; there is not a relative to whom I could consign my child—the only child I now acknowledge as such. Your two brothers, Niel, and Zied Nesmond, are both villains. Your sister, at best a vain, heartless coquette ; and as to the best of us all, my dear mother, her existence is so interwoven with Therese, that the castle, which must in a few years devolve to Therese, is no home for you, Eve ; so add not to my sad inheritance of woe and tribulation, by re-

fusing to alleviate the horrors of approaching dissolution, by a knowledge that the best of daughters is under the protecting love of an honourable gentleman; and Chudleigh, in his person, adds to his good looks an independence, sufficient for comfort."

Eve consented to her father's wishes. There was a struggle in her heart at thus plucking from her mind its cherished sentiment of first-love, and its rose-coloured but deceptive light. Of an attachment, such as Lieutenant Nesmond had awakened in her bosom, she was no longer capable; his base desertion had brushed off the rich soft bloom of confiding, unbounding affections; and the first delicate bloom of youth moral or physical, once lost, can never be restored.

Happily, from an over-wrought fastidi-

ousness, Chudleigh Merton was charmed, not disappointed, at her timid, retiring manner, and natural shyness ; and he felt no repulsion in the tears, and blushes, and silence with which she accepted his professions of love. Yet, beneath this calm, almost stern, bearing, Major Merton was a man of powerful, almost uncontrollable passions ; not easily awakened, and, as events proved, capable of dissimulation.

The preliminaries of the marriage were rapidly settled. Major Merton had no one to consult, beyond friendly courtesies, and Eve's five thousand pounds had been paid in to her banker. There was too much excitement in the triumphant letter, forwarded by Captain Barnulph to the castle, announcing to its dame, this—his Eve's approaching nuptials, animadverting on her good fortune in having gained the affection of such a gentleman as

Major Merton, and his own pleasure at the proposed alliance. He concluded in these words :—


“ My dear mother,—Ever keep in mind, that under no opinion or pretence, is Major Merton to learn the insult offered to my daughter, and to me, by that prince of rascals, Zied Nesmond ; an insult which, as a soldier and a gentleman, I should have expiated with his blood or my own, but for the wretched cause that the villain is my son-in-law ; but my disgrace—such I deem it—in quietly submitting to the cruel manner my daughter was slighted, must never transpire beyond those already acquainted with the transaction. To elude Major Merton’s enquiries relative to my family, I said that my elder daughter had eloped with some half-foreigner or other, and got married in Scotland ; that the re-

collection was painful, so I cast it off; and that my son had also married, to displease me. Of course, I gave a full account of the heirship of Barnulph being in the female line, and that after Therese (except she had daughters), Eve would be heiress. On this point, my daughter Eve has not acted towards me with her usual dutiful submission; having presumed, from her romantic views of life, to contend, that the necessity of unlimited confidence in the man she is going to wed, is an imperative duty. But I have at length won her to my side, though not to my opinion. In short, dear mother, I could not survive the idea that so honourable and proud a person as Major Merton should learn that a daughter of the house of Barnulph had been jilted by a mongrel rascal."

The concealment thus forced on Eve by

her father, caused her much unhappiness ; and she would never have consented to act so against her principles of truth and duty, but for Captain Barnulph's unhappy state—his mind evidently failing under powerful excitement. However, she at length won him to throw in a clause, that if ever any circumstance should arise to throw her into Zied Nesmond's company,—and devoutly she prayed that such an event might never occur—then, as an excuse to avoid his and Therese's society, she might acquaint her husband with the former engagement.

Seeing the propriety of this, Captain Barnulph sullenly consented ; after which Eve, at the altar, pledged her maiden vows to live, until death parted them, as wife to the man from whom she had a reserve ; and this small grain of deception spread out



into a mighty tree, overshadowing with its baleful influence that period of her life which else had been so bright and happy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE romantic partizans after first and only love, must have been outraged and surprised at the happiness experienced by Major Merton and Eve. The former, every hour more tenderly loved his graceful bride; in short, his love might be termed inordinate. There was no such ecstasy in her feelings; but Chudleigh, by his truthfulness, straightforwardness, and manly bearing, gained on her affection and respect. Her

timidity found support in his bolder character. To romance she had bid adieu ; or fancied that she had, because she had cast aside the poetic effusions of genius, once her delight. Then Chudleigh Merton seemed in all things the very reverse of Zied Nesmond ; consequently, as the latter had been so lost to all good feeling, the former must be perfect. This reasoning in the comparative, though not logical, is very general.

Accustomed from infancy to the control of others,—for Captain Barnulph, even where he loved, was gloomy and despotic, and exacting ; and Mrs. Barnulph had been more of a practically good woman, than an indulgent or an endearing one,—Eve did not discover what very few of her sex could have been blinded to, or have borne with submission ;—that Major Merton calmly, but decidedly, held

the reins of domestic government solely in his own hands. He was indulgent—such was his pleasure; but his wife should go so far and no farther; all this egotistic despotism, however, was carried on in a mild, gentlemanlike way, and somehow, Eve, from the day of her marriage, felt that she was expected to obey in all things; and, considering it no evil, cheerfully submitted to her lord and master's command. There lay the secret of their domestic peace.

In trivial matters, all connected with the Mertons proved fortunate. Lord Merton (the Major's uncle), in former days, had been a favoured lover of Lady Barnulph. If the reminiscence, as marking departed years, was painful, still it awakened tenderness towards the nephew; and, to a case of superb jewels for the bride, Lady Barnulph added equipages and horses for Chudleigh; and Captain Bar-

nulph insisted on their residing with his family at the elegant residence in Bombay, where Eve must still preside as mistress. All this was particularly agreeable to Major Merton, who was proud, and expensive in his tastes, though limited as to means. Among the letters that passed relative to those arrangements, from the Castle to Bombay, the names of Zied or Therese were not noticed — no allusion whatever made to them.

One cloud, even then, cast its shadow over Eve. Major Merton, a man of the world, had an intense curiosity about the heirship of Barnulph, and constantly spoke of the probability of her yet being the heiress ; happily, never suspecting that she had seen Zied Nesmond. He made no enquiries relative to him ; and to those about Therese, she always replied, " That her

sister was extremely pretty and accomplished." Of Nial she was more candid in her descriptions ; evasion was torture to her candid mind ; still, untoward circumstances had forced it on her practice.

After a time, Major Merton ceased to trouble her on the subject ; in fact, the excitement to him was the heirship ; and finding Eve so indifferent to wealth, and so uninformed as to the particulars of inheritance, he soon ceased to press inquiries.

Early in the second year of Eve's marriage, she became the mother of a boy. At Lady Barnulph's request, who stood for him, he was named Siward. The good dame, in her congratulatory letters on the event, carelessly remarked, that as yet Therese had no prospect of an addition to her family. This afforded sincere pleasure to both Captain Barnulph and Major Merton.


A few months after Siward's birth, the former expired in his daughter's arms, at the early age of fifty-one ; this, to Eve, was a bitter grief.

Another two years glided by with no shade of scene, except her filial mourning, to Eve ; when Major Merton, who, in consequence of some disagreement with his senior officer, had exchanged into another regiment, received orders to immediately join his present corps, then engaged in the war of the Peninsula : so not an hour was to be lost in preparations to proceed forthwith to Europe.

* * * *

Sad was Eve's regret on bidding, what she believed to be, a last farewell to the orient clime of her birth ; her best consolation, that Spain, not England, would be their quarters. Of the horrors of war she had not

the remotest conception ; one wish prevailed, one prayer more fervent was offered up to the throne of grace, that she might never meet the Nesmonds. Of Nial she had no fear, being aware that he had fixed his residence in Cuba, for Captain Barnulph had bequeathed to him six thousand pounds ; and this had opened a correspondence between their men of business, by which she had gained her informations ; also Siward was left by his grandfather one thousand pounds, to be put to interest till he was of age ; the residue of the property was Eve's, she being residuary legatee, by which she might one way or another have gained something over two thousand pounds. To Therese, to prove that she was not omitted from want of recollection, Captain Barnulph left one shilling.



CHAPTER XII.

THE Light Dragoons, into which Major Merton had exchanged, only arrived at Cadiz a few weeks previous to his journey ; the voyage from Bombay had been tedious, and Eve, who again expected to be a mother, suffered much. This had still farther awakened her husband's tenderness ; he felt for the gentle being, who, separated from her country, and then an orphan, accompanied him to a foreign land, with whose manners and language she was unacquainted.

On reaching Cadiz, finding that yellow fever was raging, and though in his own person dreading neither war nor pestilence, his heart trembling for its treasures of love, Eve and her cherub boy, Major Merton proposed their proceeding to England. For the first time disputing his will, she cast herself in his arms, exclaiming, "No, Chudleigh, like the Trojan dame of old, I may say to my hero, that in him I have found mother, father, brother, sister; no, Merton, you and Siward are my all; consign me not to the horrors of separation and suspense at leaving you amidst these frightful dangers. Then, were you ill or wounded, who would so tenderly nurse you as Eve?" Such entreaties could not be resisted; and, if possible, Major Merton more than ever adored his Indian, as he playfully termed her.

In consequence of his Colonel's illness, Major Merton was obliged to remain in quarters, but he engaged a commodious suite of apartments for Eve. They were at the western side of the city, and lay between the Almeda and the sea ; the lattices opened on large painted balconies overlooking a pleasure ground, bordered with citron, orange, and apricot trees, whose perfumes were wafted by the breezes which swept over the Mediterranean into the saloon, rendering it, amidst the raging pestilence, a salubrious and charming home ; and to it Major Merton every evening resorted, to caress his boy and accompany Eve either in her walks or drives.


It required no enthusiasm to be charmed with Cadiz, its fine bay and the magnificent country which surrounded it ; and just then each object derived a fresh interest from the

pomp and pride of war, its horrors not yet visible. What contrasts and combinations! The solemn hymns and requiems of long trains of dark-robed monks, and barefooted, rope-girdled friars, intermingling with the warlike stirring trumpets and clarions of the men of war, in their flaming scarlet uniforms, and then, again, the varied costumes and occupations of visitors from almost every land; and as Major Merton led his delighted companion through the different cathedrals, and the remains of antiquity with which Cadiz abounds, he recounted to her the traditions of its romantic foundation, its strangely prophesied conquests over the Moors, the phenomena of its retreating waters—exposing to view the wonders of the mighty deep—and the wild, fantastic superstitions which sprang from events that the Spaniards persisted in not imputing to

natural causes. Truly Spain seemed to have been a land of wonders, as well as of chivalry and romance.

More delightful still were drives through the country, when alighting they would wander amidst the groves of citrons, olives, oranges, and pomegranates, of the luxurious clime, so rich in Earth's best fruits.

These were Eve's halcyon days of married life ; the affection of her husband kept from her knowledge that the next week, nay hour, might involve him in the interests and horrors of war. As yet she only knew of warfare through the medium of poetic romance, and she gloried in considering her husband was a warrior. There is ever something elevating to women of lofty sentiments, in being beloved by a soldier ; to see the heart which quails not at danger or death, melt in tenderness at their lightest suffering. Eve's



mind was strongly imbued with this feeling ; and when, casting aside his sword, Major Merton would place Siward on one knee, forcing her with laughter on the other, she felt such love, placed such confidence in her husband's truth and devotion, that she believed death alone could alter his sentiments towards her ; forgetful that the staff she leant upon was human, and, as such, a bending reed.

Some few weeks had thus passed—in about six more Eve expected her confinement, and for some days had been unusually depressed : one of those foreshadowings of coming sorrow for which no one can account, had cast its gloom over her spirits ; observing which, Major Merton became more than ever attentive.

It was earlier one evening than usual for him to escape from duty, as, affecting to have

dined, though in reality he had not, he drove her through an unfrequented road, which by a circuit led to the village of Chiclana. He selected it for retirement and the rich plantations which fringed its borders here and there, opening into vistas. Perfectly charmed with the scenery, they alighted, and wandering into a little gorge surrounded by gentle undulations, sat down on a bank of turf; they had not been many minutes seated, when the notes of a cornet piston came floating on the air, told back by numerous echoes; it seemed as if the whole space was filled with harmonious sounds.

“How exquisite,” cried Major Merton, starting up, “to hear Auld Robin Gray in Spain! it brings me back to Scotland, land of song, my loved Scotland! Speak of Italian music, by Heaven! there is no music to

compare with the Scotch. Step forward, love, and let us see the performer."

They advanced to the foot of a rising mound and beheld an officer, in the uniform of the ——. "Ho!" exclaimed Major Merton, "by-the-bye, I did hear that a detachment of the —— were expected from Gibraltar; I am glad of it, for there are many of my former messmates in it."

The performer on the cornet piston stood on an elevation to catch the echo; his back was nearly turned towards the Mertons, whom he did not observe, there being some distance between them, and besides a row of olives shaded them from view, while his figure was conspicuous

One glance was sufficient to show Eve that it was Zied Nesmond: instantly cold shudderings seized her frame, she felt as if a precipice had suddenly yawned beneath her

feet, as she rapidly thought—"What, oh ! what will become of me ? my fatal secret must be discovered ; what then, to Chudleigh, so devoted, honourable, truthful, and confiding, will avail my innocence or the tissue of events which forced me to deception ? he will never forgive me ; his confidence, his love will follow."

The thought was unbearable ; shriek after shriek burst forth, she grasped wildly at her husband, as if she feared his desertion.

Folding her in his arms, he said,—

"Calm yourself, my best love, the danger has passed ; see, dearest, they have yoked the bull."

It appeared, that, by a fortunate chance, a young bull which the Matadores were training in the arena had escaped ; bellowing and dashing about its horns, it was making for its native plains, near the village of

Chaclana ; and just as the Mertons had discovered Zied Nesmond, it was seized by the keepers.

Bearing her fainting form in his arms, Major Merton placed Eve in the open carriage, and, as he slowly drove back to Cadiz, gaily said, hoping to arouse her evident depression,—

“ Now, positively, Eve, you are making me, by nature the least of all imaginative persons, as fanciful as yourself ; for I think that I must have been romancing, it could not be a reality.”

“ What, dearest Merton ? ” she faintly enquired.

“ Why, just as the bull was rushing up the mound, tearing up the earth with its horns and hoofs—really I never saw so wild an animal—the officer of the cornet piston gave a peculiar whistle, when up dashed a

splendid barb, popped on its fore knees, then on its back sprang the officer—fleet as the wind they disappeared ; now surely this is fancy—but, Ellen, dear, you are faint : thank heaven, here at length we are at home, and in safety !”

CHAPTER XIII.

A PREMATURE confinement, endangering Mrs. Merton's life, was the result of this adventure. The still-born babe was a girl. Major Merton now, for the first time since their marriage, betrayed some of the darker feelings of his nature, so great was his disappointment; and this positively grieved Eve more than her severe suffering, imminent danger, and the loss of the anxiously prepared-for child.

Even when Eve was pronounced out of danger, the most undisturbed repose, physical and mental, was ordered ; Siward was not permitted to enter her apartment, and Major Merton only once a day, a few minutes, to make inquiries, and to assure himself that she was progressing towards recovery ; for his unjust anger at the loss of the daughter, (who might be the heiress,) had at least been subdued into rationality, since Eve's life was pronounced to be in danger.

Days elapsed ; then Eve, borne in her husband's arms, was laid on a couch in the salon, the opposite lattice being shaded by an awning, and a fountain playing in the centre of a blooming parterre without.

Her recovery was delayed by anxiety ; the period for relieving her mind of its harrowing secret had arrived, and she resolved to acknowledge to Major Merton her former en-

gement with Zied Nesmond ; still it required no small degree of moral courage; and when she remembered her husband's uncurbed anger at the loss of his female child, and his longing after the Barnulph estates,—she shuddered at what might be the result of her confession ; for she was fully resolved to explain all—she hated mystery or deception.

Military duties called Major Merton to Murcia for some days. The second evening after his departure, as Eve lay listlessly on her couch, she was startled by hearing an opposite lattice open : the next moment, to her surprize, Captain Nesmond, in plain clothes, entered, but remained at a respectful distance.

Terrified, she reached out her hand to grasp a table bell, which summoned her attendant ; but observing the movement, Nes-

mond sprang forward, snatched the bell, then fell back to his former position. He was of marble paleness ; in other respects, a few years, by giving a more manly appearance to his person, rendered it still more remarkable in its perfection ; his eyes, fixed on Mrs. Merton, were expressive of profound melancholy.

For some minutes there was silence ; when Mrs. Merton, who by an effort (for her strength was gone) had raised herself from the recumbent attitude, haughtily exclaimed,—

“ Captain Nesmond ! what means this unwarranted intrusion ? I command you to retire.”

“ Mrs. Merton, I am fully aware of my intrusion, of my presumption, but I owe it to you and myself to explain the tissue of events which, to appearance branded me

with dishonour, for breaking my engagement with you. Oh! Eve," he sighed convulsively.

Her pride and anger were roused—she made a spring to escape ; but, overpowered by weakness, her limbs failed, and she fell back helplessly on the couch. Though actually quivering at seeing the state to which she was reduced, Captain Nesmond remained rooted to the spot, offering no assistance—it had been presumptuous.

Still faint, Mrs. Merton's anger roused her to such indignation, that she scornfully exclaimed,—

" Captain Nesmond ! vain and presuming as you are, believe me, neither apologies nor explanations are required, quite out of place, as your most dishonourable and ungentlemanlike conduct has proved a source of good fortune. Certainly the wife of Major Merton

has nothing to regret, and much to rejoice at, in having escaped an union with Zied Nesmond ; and now, sir, add not to the ungentlemanlike conduct by taking advantage of my extreme debility, and obliging me to submit to the company of one I so utterly despise, nay, abhor."

"Eve," he replied in touching accents, "do not, I entreat, injure yourself by attempting, in your weakened state, to move. Oh ! my deep grief to see you thus. You look impatient — I call heaven to witness, your health, your honour, your peace, are dearer to me than any other consideration. I had rather be hooted from the army as a coward, and be branded with shame, than bring one blush into your cheek, or the faintest taint of scandal on your name. Major Merton, your high-minded husband, values not your fame, interwoven as it is with his own,

more proudly than do I, though now to you, Eve, an object of contempt. Nay," he added, passionately, "you shall hear my defence. In the first place, had I known of your being in Cadiz, I had not been here ; but a few days since I arrived officially from Gibraltar, where my corps is quartered, and last night, for the first time, I met Major Merton at the mess of ——. Immediately on learning my name, he introduced himself as a brother-in-law ; his address was courteous, and even affectionate. In the course of conversation I found that he remained in ignorance of my former engagement to you, supposed that we had never met, as he proposed introducing us to each other soon as your health permitted. Excuse me, Mrs. Merton, but this reserve to your husband, one who seems worthy of your best affections, was not well—nay, look not so dis-

tressed, and pray excuse me in taking a brother's part to advise. Let Major Merton know all ; you, at all events, have been guilty of no impropriety — wherefore, then, this disguise ? However, to-morrow I leave for Gibraltar, and hope never again to meet you on earth."

She proudly answered,

" Captain Nesmond, to me it is a matter of perfect indifference. I want no explanation ; I will listen to none—this interview is unbearable."

" In your father's name, Eve, he my most esteemed friend, I supplicate you to hear my defence. Oh ! Eve, do not refuse."

The mention of her father again roused Eve, generally so mild, to great anger.

" Away, away, Captain Nesmond ! and bear with you the knowledge that in his expiring hours my dear father thanked the Almighty

for having saved his Eve from the shame of being Zied Nesmond's—the traitor's—wife."

As she spoke, his whole frame was convulsed with emotion; no longer pale, his countenance glowed to a deep crimson—it is scarcely a figure of speech to say that his eyes darted fire : he made a spring, fell on his knees near the couch, grasped Eve's hands, then let them go, and for two or three seconds actually rushed up and down the apartment. Then stretching his arms towards her, he exclaimed,

"Now, in God's name! I command you to read the explanation that will be laid before you. And now, Mrs. Merton, I go."

The next moment he had passed through the lattice, at that side it opened in the direction of the sea.

It was then about three in the afternoon ; the attendant doctor soon after called, and

perceiving Mrs. Merton much excited, administered a soporific, and she sunk into a heavy slumber. It was nearly nine when she was roused from it by again hearing the distant lattice rise : a moment and Captain Nesmond stood beside her ; he looked miserably ill, and his voice was husky and tremulous, as with forced calmness he said—

“ Mrs. Merton, there is no presumption in this intrusion. I have brought these papers for your perusal, and did not wish to confide them to your attendants.”

He fell on his knees ; no longer calm, but with a countenance and manner bordering on despair, he continued—

“ Eve, do not refuse this my last request, for this must be our last meeting. Oh, Eve ! and must it be ? It shall, it must—farewell.”

He uttered a cry of anguish, sprang from his knees, and bounded out through

the lattice, closing it after him by a spring which could only be pressed from within. It seemed that he dreaded his resolution, and thus prevented the possibility of returning.

Seeing no impropriety in examining the papers, and experiencing an intense curiosity to know by what circumstances Zied's marriage with Therese had taken place, she perused the packet with attention on the following day, that evening being too much exhausted for the effort; and now again Eve, urged on by Zied's brotherly advice, resolved to make her statement of past events to Major Merton.

How different had been the tenor of her future life, if this imperative duty had been adhered to; but undoubtedly the timidity of her character oft amounted to a weakness.

CHAPTER XIV.

ZIED NESMOND's explanation was hastily written, and in parts scarcely legible—evidently he must have suffered extreme agitation ; and he commenced in the following abrupt manner :—

“ Eve,—Mrs. Merton I should say—this morning having indignantly, nay scornfully, refused to hear my solemn entreaty that you would at least listen to my defence, of having entered into a marriage with your

sister, while yet by every tie of honour, truth, and affection, I was bound to you, oh, Eve !—but it is not my purpose to trouble you with the outpourings of my feelings, and griefs and apologies are out of place, my conduct having led to your union, which you rightly esteem as far happier with Major Merton, consequently I shall confine myself to a relation of facts such as must remove from my name the double crimes of dishonour and base avarice by these stigmas. Mrs. Merton, I have become to you an object of contempt, and, it appears, to your respected father, one of abhorrence ; and now to him I never can be acquitted. Oh, this is dreadful !

“ Until I was some weeks at the Castle, Mrs. Merton, be pleased to remember that I kept, and sent to you, a diary of every action and thought ; so from the period that diary

ceased, I shall commence my explanations.

“Sir James Nesmond, my uncle, arrived from Caithness at the Castle, his presence being absolutely necessary for the final arrangements of my marriage settlements with you. Oh, how angrily I execrated these forms of an over-wrought civilization ; how my spirit, glowing with a love pure as it was ardent, a love which without a moment’s hesitation would, if necessity required, have influenced me to sacrifice my life to your support, rose with indignation, at the idea that legal bonds were thought necessary to oblige me, in the event of death, to act generously, nay, even less, honestly by my beloved one, the wife of my bosom, the familiar friend of my home. Sir James Nesmond informed me that the Tigris had been unexpectedly ordered to sail for

India with some government despatches. This intelligence provoked me, as I concluded that you and your father would be disappointed at not receiving letters from England. I now come to the most painful part of my explanation ; but, as I said, I owe it to you and to myself to remove the supposition of having acted dishonourably. Had you permitted, a few words might have sufficed to convince you, that though unfortunate, supremely so, I have not been guilty—but you drove me from your presence. I murmur not, resolved in writing to be more explicit than in your presence I could have been. Yes, it is not only painful but mortifying—for she is now my wife—to speak lightly of Therese, but there is no alternative ; too long have I submitted to the contemptible opinion you must have formed of my conduct.

“ From the period of my reaching the Castle, Therese spared no art to seduce my affections from you. Though then ignorant of her capricious character, still far from being captivated by her bold freedom, it revolted me ; so unlike your retiring, blushing modesty, my very ideal of feminine attraction : thus, if possible, your sister’s forwardness attached me more closely to you ;—but no— it was not possible to increase an admiration already boundless, so the only effect of Therese’s lures was to annoy and embarrass me ; still such were her powers of persuasion, that she succeeded in convincing that she had imbibed a passion for me ; and dupe as I proved, though by no means flattered, I pitied her, but with a pity by no means akin to love ; on the contrary, I shunned her presence.

“ To those acquainted with Therese’s cha-

acter, no caprice can appear surprising ; still in the part she now acted there was a feeling far more potent than mere coquetry—the egotistical vanity, which undoubtedly is the leading motive of her every action. In her attack upon my heart she was urged on by envy of your superiority in attracting so many, while with all her advantages of wealth and position, she remained unloved. Envy leads to malice, and every consideration was overlooked in her resolve to supplant you in my affection.


“ A new source of irritation now arose ; my uncle’s legal advisers discovered, or, as it was proved, fancied, that there was some flaw as to the validity of the title deeds of his Caithness estates, and which being bequeathed to me by succession, Lady Barnulph wished to form a part of your settlement. It was advised that higher legal

opinions should be consulted : smarting at this delay to my departure, I became impatient and restless as a caged lion, witnessing which my kind old uncle set off to hurry the lawyers. A few days after, he wrote to me from London, sending various presents for my bride, and, what afforded me more joy, explaining that his title deeds were all right ; some forms, however, to secure the succession, should be gone through, consequently there was little chance of all being concluded so as to permit of my departing in the Leopard, which expected to sail for Bombay in three weeks or thereabouts

“ Every day my position became more embarrassing. At Lady Barnulph’s desire, my engagement with you, Eve, was kept secret, except from those connected with our immediate families. She wished to avoid the gossiping enquiries of the neighbourhood ;

consequently, as even when in company Therese treated me with a marked distinction, a report was circulated that we were lovers, and no small quantum of envy at my gaining the heiress was brought into requisition against me ; and through quizzing and innuendos, this came to my knowledge.

“ What could I do ? Scarcely a day that Lady Barnulph did not propose my walking, riding, or driving, with Therese, viewing me in the light of her brother-in-law. The good dame would have been offended had I declined. There was now left but one path for me to pursue,—it might appear harsh ; still, I should act by my notions of honour and right ; so I would explain to Therese the reports in circulation, as an excuse to be released from her attentions. On my side, this required no sacrifice—far from it ; her coquetry ennuied me, and the more evident



hastily opened a casket of jewellery ; the selection was rich, and in good taste. Lady Barnulph expressed her unqualified admiration, and observing that she also must select something handsome for the dear, lovely Eve, retired from the apartment.

“ The dark cloud which had gathered over Therese’s brow, whom you must have discovered to be covetous—marvellously so, when one reflects on her vast possessions—now burst forth in a torrent of reproaches. ‘ Cruel ! ’ she exclaimed, ‘ all for Eve—none for me ! Oh ! Zied Nesmond, have I deserved this, false ingrate as you are ! ’ There was no affectation just then in her manner ; her heart overflowed with a bitterness she attempted not to control. Then, as I have just remarked, she really had acted herself into a supposed passion for me, until she believed in its existence.

“ I offered no reply. I had been devoid of courtesy to have uttered a sentence to wound her feelings ; still—for by nature my temper is warm—I had some difficulty in curbing the expressions of indignation at the embarrassing position I was placed in by her persevering weakness, and which, however involuntary on my part, cast a shade of dishonour on my conduct. So, disregarding her tears—for she wept violently from envy and vexation—I was carefully re-arranging the jewellery in the casket, when, with the impetuosity of a spoiled child, she snatched a short gold neck-chain, studded with brilliants, and to which a ruby key and heart were suspended.

“ ‘ At least,’ Zied, she exclaimed, opening her dress, and fastening it round her throat, ‘ you cannot refuse me this, all cruel and ingrate as you are. See how it be-

comes me.' She turned her neck—blushing at the consciousness of its fine formation and exquisite airiness.

“ But, though she had been more lovely than the fabled Houris, she could not, in my mood, have awakened any sentiment than anger at her persevering coquetry ; so, turning disdainfully from her, I vehemently answered,—

“ ‘ Therese ! why provoke me with this childish nonsense ? that necklace is not mine, it belongs to your sister ; and, as you well know, is Sir James’s present to her, as are also these,’—closing the casket.

“ ‘ Cruel !’ she exclaimed ; then, in caressing accents, ‘ Zied, just say, with tenderness, were this yours,’ touching the ruby heart, ‘ that you would give it to me, and then Eve may have the necklace.’

“ I replied very passionately, ‘ Then you

may keep it to eternity ; for if mine, to Eve, and Eve alone, would I present it ; she is my beloved, my affianced.'

" 'Remember !' she cried triumphantly, ' you have given me this to eternity ; thanks, Lieutenant Nesmond,' with a sneer. The next moment she became hysterical, actually screaming with violence.

" My temper was roused to such anger, that, offering no assistance, I rushed from the apartment, and rode until the hour for dressing.

" Therese did not appear at the dinner-table. This annoyed me, fearing that she might really be ill, and I felt conscience-struck as I reflected that, yielding to temper, I had left her in hysterics, not even summoning attendance. However, observing the good dame of the castle entertaining the guests with her usual gentle suavity, I

cheered up, and entered into conversation with a young Scotchman, of the name of McObery, and who I knew was a friend of my uncle's, and some connection of the Nesmonds.

“In the course of conversation, which we carried on *sotto voce*, he led to Therese, by saying that he understood that she and I were betrothed, a distinction that he envied me, as though his acquaintance with her was slight, merely having danced together two or three times at balls, that she had inspired him with such a sentiment of admiration, that, except for her engagement to me, he had purposed to pay his addresses.

“With more vehemence than seemed necessary, I assured him to the contrary, confiding my betrothment to you.

“Mr. McObery expressed his thanks for my confidence, and as I urged him on to gain

the heiress, an immediate intimacy sprung up between us ; soon after he glided from the table, whispering, ‘ There are so many fine military beaux to be here to-night,—I had best be the first in the field of Venus.’ Trifling as this conversation may appear, it cheered me, hoping that in the joy of a new conquest, Therese would release me from her attentions. Proud and ambitious, no doubt she would spare no pains to secure the Mc Obery, who was not only in possession of a fine fortune, but was next heir to a Scotch earldom.

“ Eve, you must remember that Lady Barnulph, with her devotion to the past customs of the castle, always dined at four ; consequently, it was still early evening, when, with the other gentlemen, I adjourned to the drawing-room, where I found Therese, superbly dressed in a fancy costume *à la Grecque*, con-

sisting of a drapery of India muslin, interwoven with gold sprigs, and which she subsequently informed me had been presented to her by you, on your visit to the castle. A quantity of natural flowers adorned her head and bosom; amidst the latter sparkled the gemmed necklace; undoubtedly she looked particularly well, glowing with delight at the buzz of admiration which fell on her ear, as she moved about; nor was she insensible to her conquest of McObery.

“Advancing sportively towards me, she whispered,—

“‘Zied, being resolved to open my ball with you, I have just refused Mr. McObery.’

“‘You were wrong!’ I exclaimed, petulantly; ‘after hearing the reports in circulation, you should shun, not seek, to be particular in your attentions to me. However, in the present instance, it is of no

consequence. My head aches, so I shall retire.'

" 'Does not your present look charming?' she said, smiling coquettishly, pointing to her neck, on which it sparkled.

" 'There,se,' I said, speaking mildly, 'though I felt displeased, I never gave it to you; however, Mr. McObery says that Sir James Nesmond will be here to-morrow, it may be to-night; pray do not permit him to see it in your possession.' Not waiting for her answer, I retired, and, to cool the throbbing of my temples, strolled down towards a root house, to which, having heard that it was your favourite seat, I oft resorted. Oh! Eve, how dear all connected with you was then to me! Do you remember the seat formed out of the roots of ancient elms? at either side are two immense large trees?—the river flows beneath, from which a rivulet waters the grounds.

“So violent was the burning and throbbing of my temples, that I dipped my handkerchief in the small stream, which, diverging from the Tweed, came murmuring by. My spirits were depressed ; already had they lost the joyous buoyancy which distinguished me during the palmy days I had spent in Bombay. From boyhood I had been subject to attacks of nervous fever, and I feared lest my present suffering might be the precursor of one of these, and still further delay my return to you, Eve. Little did I anticipate that the hour which was to raise an impassable barrier between us was rapidly approaching.

CHAPTER XV.

"I WAS startled by Therese, with a merry laugh and dramatic air, dancing into the root-house. Throwing aside the large cloak which encompassed her ball dress, smiling, blushing, coquetting to an indiscreet degree, with pathos she repeated some sylvan poetry, at the same time, from a large bouquet she carried in her hand, strewing flowers at my feet. But it is useless to describe her conduct; full of levity and

nonsense, froward to a degree ;—but let me do her justice—it was the frowardness of a child. The idea of impropriety never occurred to her. The very supposition of insult would have driven her from me with horror at her own volatility. Never submitting to be contradicted, she resolved that I should, and *must* return to open the ball, then she would release me. This was her object.

“ In vain I pleaded illness. She was positive, I was equally so : incensed at her pertinacity, I found it difficult to command my temper, or expressions of dislike ; as it was, I became all but rude.

“ ‘ I’ll not be defeated,’ she cried, grasping my hand, and actually leaning her head on my shoulder, and caressingly smiling into my very eyes.

“ Now, I call Heaven to witness, this fro-

wardness only moved me to anger. I turned my head towards the door, to avoid her looks of affected passion ; and oh ! Mrs. Merton, there you stood before me, in the dress you wore—it was of blue Persian—the day I bade you farewell, ere I departed for Europe, and for the first time held you in my arms : you were steadfastly gazing at us, more particularly at me, with a look expressive of reproach and scorn. Do you remember, Eve, we parted in the vestibule of your father's villa ; alas ! the appearance was but the hallucination of coming fever, and with a look of sadness and scorn, you vanished, leaving me in a state of fearful excitement.

“ I sprang from my seat—I uttered an exclamation, when, with a feeling far less pleasurable, but equally astonishing, I beheld Sir James enter the arbour.

“ ‘What am I to understand by this?’ he demanded, gazing at Therese, then at me : ‘just now, sir, (to me) on arriving at the Castle, and enquiring for you, some of the serving men directed me here; speak, Zied ! are you such a rascal as to make love to this girl, while engaged to her sister ? if so, you are a changeling, not a Nesmond, and I shall disinherit you.’

“The indignation this speech roused in Therese, lent dignity to a self-possession which never failed : stepping proudly and gracefully forward, she haughtily said,—

“ ‘Sir James, you forget yourself — or rather you forget of whom you speak. Lady Barnulph wished Mr. Nesmond to open our ball this evening : hearing that he was here, I came to acquaint him ; he declines—from headache, he says,’—then, as if she was crossing the stage, she put on her

dark mantle, and glided off by some narrow pathway through the plantation.

“ ‘I am dumbfounded!’ cried my uncle, with a vacant look. ‘Out with the truth, boy; how is this?’ I corroborated what Therese had said unhesitatingly.

“ He looked fixedly in my flushed face.


“ ‘Hah! I see how it is; you have drunk too much of the Castle wines; many a good man’s case; better go to your room, boy—dancing will excite you too much—here, take my arm. The wine, being superexcellent, it will leave no ill effect, so by to-morrow, after a night’s sleep, all will be right again.’—I gave a forced laugh.

“ As we proceeded—‘I say, Zied, my boy, that gimcrack on the heiress’s neck, looks very like the necklace I sent to your Indian love: you would not be such a traitor, as to give it to that forward coquette?’

“ ‘Certainly not,’ I exclaimed ; then, to shun further conversation, bade him a hasty good night. He entered the ball-room, and I retired to my sleeping one.

“The next week, though, as it subsequently appeared, the fever was lurking in my veins, I felt rather better. Therese seemed solely occupied with Mr. McObery. There was a constant round of evening parties ; but during the mornings, Therese left the Castle guests to amuse themselves, while she rode, or more frequently rowed in a boat she called the Water Nymph, on the Tweed. This pretty little vessel had sails, but except on a particularly calm day, even the most enterprising of the fishermen would not dare spread their canvas, as the river, about a quarter of a league from the castle, opened into eddies, or whirlpools, so extremely dangerous, that even with a freshening breeze it was not deemed safe to hoist a sail.

“ Though suffering from occasional headaches, so pleased was I at being no longer the chief object of Therese’s coquetry, that my spirits became more equal. At the conclusion of the week, it was then Tuesday, as the Castle party sat at breakfast, which its Lady wished to be as general as dinner, with the post came the Gazette, announcing me as Captain ; so my uncle in gay terms, spoke—‘ So, Captain, my boy, here is all as it should be ; let me see, this is Tuesday, the thirteenth, well—Wednesday, Thursday, I have it, (still reading a letter) Friday, there it is. The lawyer will be down here to have the papers signed ; Zied, you understand. Then all is finally arranged ; so, Friday evening, that night make the three first stages, next day to be early in London, ready to sail in the Leopard, after all.’ He clapped his hands and actually caught me in his arms in a transport of joy.



“ There was a laugh—I expressed my delight at the prospect of being in time for the Leopard, even though Therese’s extreme agitation was visible. Most of the company believed that the papers Sir James had alluded to, were connected with the troop to which I had been gazetted, and, as the report went, that the heiress and I were attached to each other, but that Lady Barnulph disapproved of the union ; though not expressed by words, many looked their sympathy for her evident distress at our approaching separation.

“ My feverish nights were so restless, that I was (of late) generally the last to breakfast, so had not heard Mr. McObery mention that, in consequence of the illness of a friend, he should proceed to Edinburgh, but would return as soon as circumstances permitted. I had taken the Gazette to the

window, also the lawyers' letters to my uncle, and being engaged in perusing them, I did not witness his adieux ; but he tapped my shoulder, and shook my hands affectionately, saying,—

“ ‘Nesmond, you will be off, wafted on the wings of Cupid, ere my return to the Castle,’ he whispered, ‘to seek my *mate*.’ He then, still *sotto voce*, spoke some pleasantries, then was off. A few moments after, Lady Barnulph said—

“ ‘Zied, if you mean to ride out, may I trouble you with a commission?’

“ ‘Undoubtedly,’ I answered, returning to the table, from which most of the company had dispersed.

“ ‘It is merely to ride down to Sawney Deptford’s, my fish merchant, and tell him to send the fish here, ordered ; the house-keeper has just sent to request that no time

should be lost. As signs and tokens of a coming storm are here, (she pointed to the sky,) and as your roadster is being led up and down this half hour, I engage you as my messenger.'

" 'Would fifteen minutes' delay be of consequence?' I demanded. 'Sir James left this letter with me to answer, desiring that these troublesome lawyers and their papers should be here on Friday, without fail.'

" She gaily replied, 'Love, which rules the camp, is more potent than even a good dish of fish, so suit your convenience.'

" I returned to the window, where was a table with writing materials. Soon after, though engaged with my letter, I perceived Therese walk rapidly by, warmly clad, for the threatened storm was preceded by a dense cold fog and mist. She evidently eluded observation. The idea that she was

going to meet Mr. McObery, crossed my mind, but could not divert my attention from the business which engaged me.

“ With all my hurry, it was upwards of an hour after Lady Barnulph had given me the commission, ere I mounted my horse to execute it.

“ There was a pretty, though wild road by the banks of the Tweed, which led to Sawney Deptford's, a disabled sailor, who had lost his leg in one of Nelson's engagements, but who now followed the business of fishmonger. He was standing on the extreme verge of the water, some short distance below the house : seeing him, I alighted and handed the Castle order.

“ ‘ Her Ladyship shall have all the fish in the house,’ he replied, ‘ little chance of more. My son left yester-even to go fish with our men, but it blew a fierce gale over the Scot-

tish side of the border. I wish Jem was back ; he is a youngster, and too venturesome. I wish he was back ;—and see, the storm is approaching.'

"He was pointing out the signs, when Therese came up.

" 'Here, Sawney,' said she, 'lead Mr. Nesmond's horse. I would walk—the day is cold.' With a bow, he obeyed.

" 'So, Zied, you leave me on Friday,' she exclaimed ;—but no, I must not repeat all the childish, coquettish nonsense she talked. Provoked, annoyed, lest Sawney, who I knew to be a shrewd fellow, should overhear, for she was imprudent, from a haughty contempt of her inferiors, I escaped from her hold, for she leant on my arm, and hurried off. She twice called me back ; without replying, I mounted my horse, and had put it to a canter, when I heard a holloa, followed by

a scream. I looked round and beheld Therese in the Water Nymph, its top-sail spread, all the rest down: she had her arms stretched out, and was screaming violently, while the light shallop, dancing on the waters, rushed down with the tide.


“A feeling of unspeakable horror seized me. ‘How is this?’ I exclaimed, going to alight; but Sawney Deptford laid his hand to check me, speaking very rapidly.

“‘Sir, not ten minutes since, I loosed the Water Nymph from her moorings, meaning to get her for safety into the little creek below the house to the eastward; for the sky, the shaded water, the sea-fowls’ cries, all bespeak a wild hurricane. Now, sir, listen attentively, and be collected and true of heart, or the pretty heiress of the Castle will this night sleep in an ocean grave. Put the spurs to your steed, dash on for a

quarter of a league, where you will see a small inlet ; swim to the shallow—can you swim ? excellently well—right, for tide and wind will be against you ; but steer the boat back to the Castle, or if that is impossible, make straight for the Scottish border. Keep in mind, if the boat runs down half a league—nay, less—below the inlet, she will be caught in a whirlpool, from which no human aid can save her—I know every point and eddy of the Tweed. Meantime, I shall ascend the heights, and sound on this (drawing out a large horn) an alarm, so if any of the fishermen are out, they will understand ; the way the horn is sounded, and the number of notes, being a sort of telegraphic communication we hold, to announce where the danger lies. Away ! God speed you ! and strengthen your arms.'

“ Striking my spurs deeply into the horse's

flanks, I sped with surprising quickness. Just as I reached the inlet, I saw the Water Nymph gliding swiftly down towards the German ocean. A moment and I had cast off coat, vest, neckcloth, boots. I had often swum for pleasure, or for rivalry, and for wagers, but never for life or death : let me not praise my own powers, or linger over a scene whose awful terror I shall never forget—by a miracle I reached the boat, having, like it, been in some degree carried off by the current : I scrambled into it. Pale as a spectre, Therese sat at the helm ; though terrified, happily she did not know the extent of her danger. I succeeded in getting down the sail. The oars were on board, and I made every effort to tack the boat towards the Castle ; it was impossible—wind and tide were both against me ; and Therese's soft arms in such a



plight, too weak to row. With a sigh to your memory, Eve, and a prayer to God for mercy towards my erring soul—though hopeless, I still used the oars, making for the Scottish border, Therese steering, and not ignorantly, for she was accustomed to pilot the Water Nymph.

“To increase difficulties, the storm came in fitful gusts, loudly, roared the wind, accompanied by vivid and continuous flashes of lightning, and amidst the confusion, floating on the wind, I heard the long notes wound by Sawney Deptford on his horn.—There was hope, some one was interested in our fate ; still we were approaching the whirlpool. The rain now poured down, my arms were losing their power from exhaustion, my mind was confused, so I cannot be quite as explicit in description as I could wish :—just as in despair I was going to relinquish my impotent

efforts, I heard the striking of oars shortly, and a fishing vessel of the largest size that plys on the Tweed, neared :—in short, Therese and I were boarded on her, and the Water Nymph put into tow. Little speech passed till we reached the Scottish border ; there the fishermen anchored in a small cove, the storm every moment increasing in violence and rain.

“ Solely under the guidance of these men, we had to proceed some distance through a narrow gorge, which ran through the rocks, the path being so deep from the mud and rain that we sank above our ankles every step. Therese was obliged to submit to the alternative of being carried by a huge Scot, being unacquainted with the way ; and by this time the evening having closed in, I had not power to assist her.


“ Our destination was a fisher's hut ;

though a miserable hovel, the immense fire of peat and sticks, and the savoury smell of fried fish preparing for the men's return, would, in our cold, wet, hungry positions, have been pleasure, but that over the preparations presided two women of masculine proportions, and with features and countenances almost too hideous for humanity. Finding we had no money about us, and being ignorant of our rank, which I by no means wished to announce, these Hecates scowled fearfully : the men, too, were savage, until I purchased civility by giving them my watch—a hostage to be returned on my paying a certain sum of money. Then the women took Therese to their apartment and rolled her in a plaid, placing her clothes to dry ; I was lent a great coat, and permitted to sit all night by the fire.

“ No possibility of crossing the Tweed

next day, so Therese being again dressed, and one of the men having lent me the great coat, we walked to a village about three miles distant. It boasted not of an hotel, but there was a sort of house of entertainment, at which horses were in preparation for travellers, who were there to change. The groom was instantly recognized by Therese, it seemed that he had lived at the Castle ; and she immediately acquainted him that we had, while boating on the Tweed, been caught in a storm and nearly lost, requesting of him to acquaint his master who she was, and entreat his attentions for her.

“ ‘ Yes, my Lady, willingly : of course you are married to the gentleman, or else my master, the Reverend Mr. Sampson, being a most righteous man, and such a pious Christian, that, for Christ’s sake, he would let you and that gentleman perish in



the rush of waters without reaching a hand to save you, if you are thus together, without being man and wife.'

" 'Oh, yes! say that we are married,' vehemently called out Therese, as the horrors of the last night in the fisher's hut pressed on her memory, and the still fierce storm began to burst forth in rain

" 'Here, Miss Barnulph, is my master,' pointing to a chariot driving rapidly forward; 'who shall I say you are?—a married lady?—no fault of mine, Miss.'

" 'Yes, true, call me Mrs. Nesmond; oh, yes, any name, but get me protection.' It appeared subsequently that the man executed his commission with great tact.

" Of this colloquy, at the time I knew nothing, and was much surprised when Mr. Sampson, a most stolid-looking person, advanced, saying, 'Captain Nesmond, I must

request you to hurry : in this wild weather, I am impatient to reach home. Please ascend into the back seat ; I regret that there is no room inside.'

· "The next moment I was seated all alone, much wondering how it all had happened, and not even knowing Mr. Sampson's name. Twice we stopped to change horses by posters kept in readiness ; but though I made several attempts to gain information, the servants were too hurried and in too much awe of his Reverence to answer ; still I perceived a deal of grinning and tittering among them. You must be aware, Mrs. Merton, that Therese had a habit of making very free with the Castle domestics, by speaking to them independent of their business.

"After the third stage, sleep overpowered me, and I did not awake until roused by the party stopping at Mr. Sampson's house in

Edinburgh. Till then, I had not a conception of where we were going, and the great distance from the Castle startled me.

“I had scarcely alighted, when, trembling with terror, Therese darted towards me : grasping my hand, she whispered, ‘Oh, Zied ! these horrid puritans asked me your name, and were you my husband : now, for your life, do not disgrace me by denial ; then to-morrow be off to the Castle and explain all to our friends,—adieu. Now, dear Zied, of course you sail in the Leopard on Saturday, so I shall see you no more ; but tell the dear old dame to lose no time in coming to release me from these odious people.’

“‘Are you deranged, Therese,’ I replied, angrily, almost rudely, ‘to expect that I would sanction such a foolish, unmeaning falsehood ? Why not explain our adventure on the Tweed ?’—

“ She interrupted me by screaming violently, and then fell into hysterics : no affectation there—she was quite convulsed.

“ The Sampsons could no longer disguise their annoyance : we looked anything but respectable, in the fisher’s great coat that I wore, and Therese’s stained, drabbed garments. However, they so far commanded themselves, as to assist me in conveying Therese upstairs, where, summoning their attendant, they retired.

“ Immediately on Therese recovering from the violence of the fit, which left her quite exhausted, without one expression of sympathy, not a good night,—I perfectly hated her for the mean and false position in which her levity had placed me,—I hurried down stairs to acquaint Mr. Sampson with every particular ; but the whole family had retired to rest. The doors were locked ; so, as my

last resource, I entered the dining-room, and stretched on the chairs, passed a restless night.

“ Here I may as well exonerate Therese so far as to explain that she had no object beyond the usual pertinacity of her temper in carrying out any caprice she had in view. When she jumped into the boat, little suspecting that it had been loosed from its moorings—her wild dread, when, moved by her weight, it darted down the current, was sufficient punishment. She had gone out to get up a scene at my approaching departure for the East ; but even I could not more sincerely regret the result of her levity than she has done : it has marred all the brightest hopes of her future life—I compassionate her destiny.

“ In passing me off for her husband, she was merely instigated by anxiety to be re-

ceived by the Sampsons until the storm abated, and had so little respect for truth that she never hesitated to adopt the intricate paths of deception. See the consequence !

CHAPTER XVI.

“FROM the troubled snatches of sleep that attended my restless position on the chairs, I sprang up on hearing the household moving about. Once or twice I fancied I heard a servant enter. Wishing to elude observation, I remained tranquil until the hall door was unfastened ; then I glided out, as I hoped, unseen, and hurried off to an hotel, meaning, soon as the shops opened where I could procure some kind of a re-

spectable surcoat, to make for the Castle of Barnulph. No impediment, so far as storm ; a night of heavy rain had calmed its fierceness, and I was impatient of delay.

“It was right to make some apology to Mr. Sampson for my sudden departure from his house. So, with thanks for his hospitality, I said that I meant to proceed without delay to acquaint Mrs. Nesmond’s friends of her safety. Oh ! Eve, pity that short sentence, ‘ Mrs. Nesmond,’ perfectly without meaning,—I had no wish to sanction her falsehood. I merely used the expression, that he should give her my message, being too angry to address her myself. Within an hour after, I was in a burning fever. Mark, by what a chain of events, apparently the most trivial and common-place, my destiny was completed, and disgrace attached to my name. Alas ! for man’s boasted power ;

every effort to rise proved fruitless ; the very anxiety prevented the possibility, but consciousness remained. I announced myself as the nephew of Sir James Nesmond, who was well known in Edinburgh, and ordered the best medical attendance to be summoned.

“The physician was skilful—performed his duty—was most kind. It was necessary to lull my mind, my disease being of the nerves ; so a day and night of forgetfulness ensued, and Friday, the very day fixed for the final signing of my marriage settlements, and my departure from the Castle, found me reduced in strength, confined to bed, but decidedly better. But why dwell on the recapitulation of events crowned with misery, and now irremediable ? On Saturday I was able to rise, but not to travel. I bore up manfully against a disappointment I deemed transient. But that evening my uncle

arrived. Eve, let me not grieve you ; for, oh !—separated as we are—surely some regret for what I suffered must arise in the heart that once loved me ! No more of this—I would not, if I could, awaken your sympathy : so shall confine myself to facts, without reference to the feelings or regrets of those concerned in this unhappy romance.

“ On the Tuesday, when Therese and I were missed, and it was found the Water Nymph was gone, every person at the Castle, and in the village, at once concluded that I had eloped with the heiress ; and to the nearly frantic Lady Barnulph the shameful report was corroborated by Sir James Nesmond, who, in his perfect fury at my disgraceful villany, mentioned how, on the night of his arrival from London, he had found Therese and me *tête-à-tête* in the root-house, but that the conviction of his reason had been

set aside by our artifices, and that, too, after he had witnessed our mutual confusion at his unexpected, unwished-for appearance ; and this supposed want of discernment in himself, still farther irritated the honest-minded Scot.

“ Unfortunately, by an evil chance, Sawney Deptford, who alone could have explained the whole business, was absent. As it subsequently appeared, on hearing the alarm sounded on the horn, his son had joined him, and together they proceeded, on business, to Newcastle.

“ On Thursday evening, letters from the McObery authenticated our supposed elopement. It seems that he and the Rev. Mr. Sampson were friends ; the latter, aware that McObery knew the Barnulphs, called to acquaint him of our seeking his protection, under circumstances, to say the least, both

strange and disgraceful. That we acknowledged our marriage; still that I had left his house and retired to an hotel, leaving my bride behind. No wonder that the puritanical Mr. Sampson both wondered at and disapproved of this conduct; and at his request, McObery, on the instant, wrote off to our mutual friends—it would appear nothing extenuating—of our shameful plight.

“Without further enquiry, Lady Barnulph sent by express a letter for her son—to the care of the Captain of the Leopard,—in it, as I have heard, accusing me of having seduced Therese into an elopement and Scotch marriage, and her indignation. On Saturday, with my uncle, Lady Barnulph reached Edinburgh, having travelled all night, and took up her abode at McObery’s.

“The scene between my uncle and me was one of violence. The proud, honest-minded Highlander could find no language

fearful enough to express his abhorrence when I refused to marry Therese—already, it appeared, my wife, by Scotch law—the most cruel, senseless, and entrapping law ever sanctioned by a civilized, wise, and moral people. In vain I dwelt upon *truths*. They were mocked ; but even if admitted, an insuperable barrier, Eve, was placed between you and me ; for, on her bended knees, Lady Barnulph—her grey hairs humbled to the dust, no longer calm or dignified—solemnly declared that she would see her whole race extinct ere Eve should wed the husband of Therese. Then came the accusation, so shamefully false, that we had spent two nights together ; appearances in this were against us,—and there was my letter, calling Therese Mrs. Nesmond. In short, we were married—by that Scotch law, so execrable in its spirit, and oft fatal in its results.

“Still, with vehemence I eschewed the very idea: it could not be. But there was no sympathy for me; the McObery held me in contempt, as a traitor to love and honour. The bitterness of jealousy urged him on, for he really admired Therese, and believed that I had encouraged his passion to shield my own ulterior views of securing the *heiress*. Lady Barnulph considered me an abandoned libertine, and hated me accordingly. Sir James looked on me as a disgrace to his honourable race. Poor Therese—so they argued—was most unfortunate—seduced by such a wretch. Why, then, did they combine to unite her to me?—simply to support the dignity of their families.

“As might be expected, the terrible agitation brought a relapse of fever. All those concerned in the strange affair just recorded sincerely wished me dead; but, as that

was uncertain, in the event of my recovery, I should be married. I do not consider that in this respect I was well treated. It matters not now.

* * * *

“I have no recollection of the ceremony which united me to Therese; it took place on the Sunday evening following our escape on board the *Water Nymph*. I have since learned that Therese stipulated that immediately after the ceremony she should accompany Lady Barnulph to London, and not see me for some time: all was acceded, so the family honour was not impugned. I was in a raging fever; my uncle helped his valet to dress me; I took some powerful opiates, and leaning on his arm, entered the appointed chamber. The Reverend Mr. Sampson, Lady Barnulph, her attendant, and my uncle were alone there; but it appeared to my view that

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the place was so crowded, there was not sufficient air. I must have had some consciousness, however, for I remember standing very erect, feeling an inclination to fall. Then Therese came in, and stood near me : I heard voices speaking, I repeated some words my uncle slowly dictated : after that, I can recall no more ; for five weeks my life was a blank or a confusion of untangible ideas, and physical suffering.

“ When first perception returned, aware that I had been ill, I believed all to be neither more nor less than the hallucinations of a fevered imagination. But when with health the truth was comprehended, it burst on me with the overwhelming force and chill of an iceberg ; and it was long before I could realise the idea that I was the husband of Therese, and that thus was raised an obstacle to my union with you, Eve, which even

death could not remove, for you were the
SISTER OF MY WIFE.

“ I meant to have been far more concise, but emotion urges me on ; suffice it then to say, that some unpleasant reports having arisen, relative to Therese’s separation and mine, Lady Barnulph wrote to my uncle on the subject, demanding his advice.

“ The kind old Highlander had been all goodness to me, for, by a tissue of circumstances, simple as those which had led to my unhappy marriage, my innocence had been proved. Sawney Deptford, hearing the contradictory reports in circulation, had come forward, and explained the facts, reprobating himself for not having mentioned to Therese that he had slipped the moorings of the Water Nymph, the cause of the whole adventure. Then the fishermen had called at the Castle with my watch, claiming the

promised sum, and explaining the danger Therese, by my great courage and good swimming, had escaped; and how I had earned the fever they heard that I suffered from, by sitting up all night in wet clothes at their fire. These men had learned who Therese and I were, from Sawney, their employer; still more, Mr. Sampson's servants had from the commencement been aware of my having spent the night of my arrival at their master's, with no better accommodation than lying on chairs in the dining room. But what to me, now, availed this testimony? it could not alter the fate to which the unreflecting interference and worldly pride of Sir James and Lady Barnulph had doomed me, while from illness I was incompetent to assert my independence, or resist their despotism.

“Exhausted in health, broken in spirit,



reckless of the future, I tacitly yielded to what I well knew had become a duty: so, accompanied by Sir James, proceeded to London, where, for the time being, Lady Barnulph and Therese resided. The heirship of Barnulph was too serious a consideration to be left to casualties; so once again Therese and I went through the form of marriage; a special licence had been procured, and the ceremony performed in state at St. George's Church.

“There was no joy, no tenderness, in this reunion of Therese and me; we were linked by a necessity, a stumbling-block to each other. However, time, which overcomes most difficulties, gradually softened down those asperities; I spared no pains to please her—no easy task then, being possessed of wealth and its appliances; she was rendered independent of seeking happiness in the

domestic circle ; habit, too, came to our aid, so on the whole, we got on tolerably well.

“ Being fond of change, and finding that since her marriage Lady Barnulph dislikes company, Therese prefers accompanying me, rather than remain in the Castle. For the last three months we have been quartered in Gibraltar ; but being for the first time likely to become a mother, and fancying the air did not agree with her, some weeks since I came here to make arrangements for her removal. I did hope to be quartered here with my troop—that now is out of the question. Therese will not regret my absence, and it is my imperative duty, Eve, to shun you ; but, as a military man, this may not always be in my power ; so once more, assuming the right of a brother, I advise you no longer to postpone acquainting Major Mer-

ton of our early engagement—setting aside every sense of duty, you owe it to your peace of mind. Then, Eve, you cannot be ignorant of the falsity of Therese's character ; to you alone, would I thus speak of my wife,—consequently, no secret in her keeping can be secure : her vanity, her love of scenes, of sympathy—in short, a thousand contemptible passions might lead her on to betray you ; so act with your natural candour, brave even a husband's anger, rather than deceive ; nay, if it suits, lay this my explanation before him.

“ Eve, I need not urge you, so tender and unselfish, to show every kindness to Therese during her approaching trial. I regret, in all sincerity to add, that her health for the last few weeks has been very delicate. Change of air, the pleasure of being near you, —she has often wished, ardently wished for

your companionship,—will I trust, tend towards her support and recovery. And now, Eve, adieu. If in this, the last communication I ever hope to hold with you, I have said a single word to offend, pray excuse what must be imputed to the agitation of my mind, not from any wilfulness. Eve, for ever, adieu!”

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. MERTON perused this long explanation with mingled sentiments of regret and pleasure. Of the facts and feelings so calmly laid before her, she did not doubt a single word—they bore the impress of truth, confirmed by her knowledge of Therese and the faith her youthful heart had placed in Zied Nesmond ; and she shed a tear on reflecting that one of his lofty sentiments and dignified views should be for ever united to a

woman whom he knew to be deceptive, selfish, unamiable. Morally speaking, in despite of her position and wealth, Therese was a *mésalliance* for Zied Nesmond. However, this explanation had removed a dark cloud from her mind. It had been so bitter to believe that the offering of a young, pure, confiding heart, should have been sacrificed on the altar of a cold, calculating, avarice. It had almost turned her against her species, checking the most charming of human feelings—benevolence. Now, amidst these reflections, there was not one reviving gleam of passion for Nesmond; not one lingering regret, or turning back to her former love; neither bitterness nor irritability, at the unprincipled conduct of Therese—from it; she rejoiced at a coquetry which had led to her union with Major Merton, for at that period nothing could ex-

ceed her esteem and devoted duty towards her husband ; he and the little Siward combined hall er earthly happiness. Adhering to the resolution of confiding her secret to Major Merton—she considered it better, at least in the first instance, not to show the papers, as he might be startled at the facility of one, whom he then must view as a rival, finding access to her solitary apartment, unknown, unobserved. And there had been two interviews ;—no, she dare not, even under the conviction of innocence, betray this fact.

For several days Mrs. Merton suffered so much from this excitement as to retard her recovery. On the fifth afternoon subsequent to it, Major Merton returned from Murcia.

“ Dear, dear Eve !” he exclaimed, “ how more than lovely you look ; really, illness has added to, not lessened, your charms.

Dear Eve, to think that I can only remain with you a few short moments," pressing her to his heart ;—" say, love, is it not provoking?"

"Cruel, to flatter; still leave me here, Merton, so lonely, my domestics all Spaniards, and I not knowing a word of Spanish." She clung to his neck, pouting, as she said, "At all events, my soldier shall not desert, for I have a secret to confide to his keeping; and, oh! dear Chudleigh, even if it annoys, you would not blame your Eve, or be harsh, and she so ill and weak, and so attached to you, Chudleigh."

"A woman's secret!" he laughed; "some ornament, embezzled by these afore-mentioned Spanish servants. Besides, dearest, duty obliges me to go to Chaclana; by-the-bye, Eve, I have such good news. Your sister, Mrs. Nesmond, is in Cadiz. Good

God ! Eve, don't be so excited ; I did not expect that the intelligence would agitate you,—rouse yourself, dearest.” .

“Merton !” she exclaimed, almost frantically, “ before I admit my sister, you must, you shall hear me. In God's name ! Chudleigh, I adjure you to grant me just half an hour's attention. In pity, do not deny my request ; your refusal will destroy me.”

“ Well, as you wish it, Eve.”

On the instant the door opened ; and with glowing cheeks, soft steps, and open arms, in glided Mrs. Nesmond—with dramatic effect, clasping Eve in her arms,—who, quite overcome, fainted. * * * *

When Eve was sufficiently recovered to listen, Mrs. Nesmond, unasked, entered on the subject of her union ; and, with the usual deception of her manner, cunningly wove such a tissue of truth and falsehood,

as must have deceived even Mrs. Merton, so well acquainted with her character, had not Captain Nesmond's explanation given a clue to unravel the web of deceit.

After this, Therese indulged her dramatic taste, by enlarging on her misfortunes—her almost hatred to Nesmond, who had thwarted all her prospects of superior rank and companionship ; for, as a companion, she could not confide in him,—summoning up her complaints, with an account of the universal admiration her beauty and talents received.

Perfectly disgusted, Mrs. Merton said,—

“ I am sorry, Therese, that your union does not prove a happy one ; for me, when I explain my former engagement to Major Merton—I may say that I am perfectly blessed. In short, Therese, till I knew my husband, I had no idea how sincerely I could

love. My liking to Lieutenant Nesmond was merely a girlish fancy,—I never loved him.”

Full of mean jealousy, Therese was provoked at this confession ; but just then, a stronger sentiment influenced her manner. She had a perfect horror of Major Merton hearing of Eve's former engagement, for she well knew that he would sternly sift into every circumstance, and she had grace and modesty enough to dread that the part she had acted should be brought to light ; besides, it could deprive her of Eve's company, of which, in all sincerity, she was very glad.

Finding that all the common-place motives which she brought forward to persuade Eve not to confide in her husband had failed, she threw herself on her knees, and with an earnestness perfectly natural, declared that, though she expired on the spot, she would

never rise until Eve had promised not to acquaint Major Merton ; at least, until after her, Therese's, confinement."

Mrs. Merton attempted to speak, but Therese's vehemence prevented the possibility, as she went on :—

"Nesmond, to shun your society, has left for Gibraltar. My health is too delicate to permit of my following ; already I feel the ill effects of the excitement resulting from meeting you and Major Merton. Well, Eve, until after this event, at which my coward heart trembles, my husband, who, for the present, commands the ———, is not to be in Cadiz ; thus I shall be alone, and if this representation does not influence you, let a holier motive—compassion towards my unborn babe. I may die, Eve: who then but you would watch over it? But should Major Merton learn of this former engagement, in

common prudence, jealousy will urge him to forbid your adoption of Zied Nesmond's child, as it of necessity would form a link of companionship and correspondence ; and, oh ! when I reflect upon what had been my fate after the death of my mother, had not Lady Barnulph adopted me, well may I shudder !”

Having gained her point, Therese, who delighted in gossip, entered into a detail of all the news of Castle Barnulph and its village ; she mentioned that Nial's wife was dead, and that he, with his son, had removed from St Jagos, into the interior of the island ; however, she knew very little relative to them.

Mrs. Merton, disturbed and dissatisfied with her own weakness, for the next week continued confined to her couch. Her sister's attention during the period was such

as to awaken the admiration and gratitude of Major Merton, and the approval of Dr. Foxley and the attendants ; and when Mrs. Merton recovered, Therese's varied powers of music, reciting, acting, and mimicry, though they could not gain her affection, cheered and amused her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME weeks after these events, Therese gave birth to a daughter. This afforded sincere pleasure to Mrs. Merton, and she sent to offer her attendance; but the medical attendants announced that Mrs. Nesmond's recovery had been so hopeless that they almost imputed it to a miracle, and that she still continued so feverish as to preclude the possibility of any person, excepting the nurse, being permitted

to enter her apartment ; consequently an express had been forwarded to Captain Nesmond, requesting that he would not come to Cadiz until his lady was convalescent.

With sincere interest and tender anxiety, Mrs. Merton looked forward to the period when she might fold the little stranger to her heart, as presumptive heiress of the broad lands of Barnulph ; the new-born babe was of consequence to that distinguished family ; and besides this, Mrs. Merton harboured a perfect dread of Seward, her boy, possessing the accursed heirship. Altogether, she felt well pleased ; but Major Merton received the intelligence of another heiress to the Barnulph estates with undisguised anger.

Upwards of three weeks had passed since the birth of Mrs. Nesmond's child, ere Mrs

Merton obtained permission to visit her. It so happened that just then Major Merton had orders for Murcia, so he offered no objection to Eve and Siward spending some days at the Nesmonds, their residence being one of the lofty houses which look out on the port of St. Mary's. Zied had hired it with its superb furniture of Venetian mirrors, framed in Peruvian gold, statues of Grecian and Italian sculptors, and pictures, gems of genius, by the old masters. The proud hidalgo to whom this palace belonged, grieved and disgusted at seeing the ancient and once-revered city crowded with heretic strangers, resolved to seek sanctuary in a monastery, till the evil effects of the reigning war had passed away.

The evening previous to the day on which Major Merton intended conducting her and Siward to the Nesmonds, Dr.

Foxley, a great friend of the Major's, an agreeable, clever, talkative man, dined with them ; he boasted of being from Yorkshire, and enjoyed a joke even more than his glass, at which he was no churl. As they sat at tea, he observed,—

“ Mark me, Mrs. Merton ; while you are with your sister, take some charm to guard against magical influence, or woe to you.”

“ In what ?” she demanded, blushing deeply.

“ That question I shall expect you to answer on your return,” he replied, laughing. “ All I know at present is from the following report. It appears that Doctor McPherson—he is surgeon of —, and considered particularly clever—gave it as his decided opinion that Mrs. Nesmond and her child could not both be saved, so the last was to perish ; in this extremity some blackamoor

nurse, an Obeah woman, McPherson terms her, managed to get him out of the way, and by her skill preserved the lives of both mother and child ; such is the gossip at the mess, and it would be no joke to enquire particulars from McPherson ; he would run his sword through any man who disputed his cleverness in the obstetric art. So when spoken to on the subject, he swore by this and by that, that the Obeah woman was a sorceress, using invocations, incantations, and Lord knows what, and ends the discourse by sending all witches and sorceresses to their common father."

"What an absurd tale!" she replied. "Well, Doctor Foxley, if Mrs. Nesmond continues delicate, you must promise to see her ; though no sorcerer, I can depend upon your skill."

"Then McPherson would send me to the

lower regions, with the Obeah woman," he gaily replied ; " and a dark companion in a gloomy region would not suit my taste."

Occupied at another table with despatches, Major Merton did not hear this conversation, which, subsequently, Eve considered fortunate.

On the following morning, Major Merton, after having conducted his lady and Siward to Mrs. Nesmond's, left for Murcia.

With stealthy steps, Mrs. Merton, holding Siward by the hand, glided into her sister's apartment, and bending over the couch, softly enquired as to her recovery ; upon which Therese sat up, threw her arms round her neck, and sobbed hysterically.

" This must not be," said a harsh female voice, with decision ; " you are under my care, Mrs. Nesmond, and agitation may bring on fever."

"But, Zoe dear," cried Therese, in a deprecating tone, "this is my sister ; I will not speak, but pray show her my child."

The lattice, which till now had been carefully closed, was opened, and standing near a small hammock, over which was thrown a superb cashmere shawl of white and silver, stood a dark-complexioned woman, busied in drawing the silken cords by which the hammock was suspended.

The woman was of fair and full proportions, rather above the middle size ; her eyes were large, dark, and lustrous, beaming with intellect, and contrasted strongly with a turban of white muslin, whose graceful circumvolutions were distinctive of the rank and position of the wearer, independent of which its many folds were artfully and judiciously arranged, so as to display a quantity of hair, dark and glossy

as a raven's wing; also earrings of gold, crescent-shaped, with a cross of the same metal in the centre.

Her dress consisted of a very full petticoat of black Barcelona damask silk, relieved by an open tunic of Persian amber-coloured sarsnet; over this was thrown the Moorish allique, its long white drapery classically arranged. A broad girdle, from which was suspended a crucifix of ebony and silver, with goutts of rich rubies, confined the waist, and a gem of equal value fastened the kerchief of black, crossed over the full bust.

A glance was sufficient to acquaint Mrs. Merton with the details of this dress; and though in some respects different, on the whole she recognized its similarity to that worn in Bombay by the Asiatic Mahomedans; and she knew that these Indian

Moors were reported to have originally come from the coast of Barbary, and that those of the higher castes boasted that they were from the banks of the Xnil, and from the Alpuxarras mountains; a princely line in former days, they owned, though the glory had long since passed away from this once distinguished race.

The character given by the gentler Hindoos to these Indian Moors was not favourable. They represented them as being prejudiced, illiberal, and most tenacious of the ancient customs of their people; worse again, though of insinuating manners, they were voluptuous, vindictive, sanguinary, all disguised by dissimulation. Such was the impress Eve's mind had received through others; but, liberal in her views, she was slow to credit evil of any person or race.

“Here then,” she thought, “is the Obeah woman Doctor Foxley was so jocose about.”

“Oh! mamma, is it not beautiful?” exclaimed Siward with vivacity, clapping his little hands in delight. “Oh! let me kiss it; indeed I will not hurt it.”

This attracted Eve’s observation; for the Moor, holding down the infant to Siward, in kindly accents said,—

“My sweet little fellow! you must not rouse, baby, so kiss it gently.”

“It is a dear little thing!” cried Mrs. Merton, caressing it. “Therese, from my heart, I congratulate you.”

“Zoe,” called out Therese, “you do not approve of my speaking, so I entreat of you to explain how you saved my life, also who you are. Here, place Siward on the bed, and I promise to remain tranquil. Remember,

Zoe, my friend, I desire no reserve with my sister, so communicate your whole history."

"Certainly, madam," replied the Moor, as she took a seat near Eve.

"Eve," Therese proceeded, "Zoe was the beloved friend of my ill-treated mother, the hapless Neno Davales. See the workings of Providence: she who received the last expiring sight of my dying parent, has received the first faint breath of my infant child."

"May I enquire," demanded Mrs. Merton, of Zoe, "whether you are from Hindostan? You resemble the Moors of that country."

"Madam," the Moor commanded, "if you thus excite yourself, Mrs. Merton must retire; be tranquil, and I shall explain." Then, turning to Eve, she proceeded,—

"I am not a Hindostan Moor; have never been in the East. My forefathers were

Moors of Granada, and of some consequence in the kingdom. After the subjection of Granada to the Spaniards, tradition reports that numerous Moors fled to the East for safety, and it is well known that, like all persecuted people, they clung, and still, even to this day, cling, far as the changes of time permit, to the habits and beliefs of their former country. So, lady, most probably the resemblance you trace in me to those Eastern Mahomedans, originates in this.

“ However, my immediate ancestors sought safety from the fierce strife of persecution amidst the fastnesses of the Alpuxarras mountains. They, in blindness, wept over the loss of country, of home, and of position ; but, truly, the hand of God may be traced through all, and blessed, thrice blessed ever be the persecution which opened to them the Christian's faith unto salvation.

When Don Davales, the Spaniard, went with his family to Cuba, to repair his broken fortunes, my father, long his dependent, followed his steps. Belonging to the Davales' household, Neno, the beautiful mother of your sister, treated me, her inferior in position, her junior in years, as a friend : she died in my arms,—died of a broken heart,—from the religious disagreements between her and your father. Subsequently I married a man of extensive knowledge, and under him I studied medicine and the obstetric art, and with great success. My life, lady, has been one of vicissitude and trouble. For the last few years, my father and husband being dead, I have followed my profession in Cadiz. By a mere chance I was hired as monthly nurse to Mrs. Nesmond ; honouring me with her converse, I learned with surprise and joy that she was the

daughter of Neno Davales. I speak not of my own emotions. Mrs. Nesmond's hour of travail came on. The Scotchman, Dr. McPherson, like the generality of his countrymen, very clever, but opinionated, declared that by no human possibility could both mother and child live. He was correct in this opinion; but there is a power far above human. To the Blessed Virgin I applied for assistance; and to her Divine influence—not to my skill—is the merit to be imputed.”

Mrs. Nesmond, an attentive listener, though continuing silent, now exclaimed,—

“Eve, I well know that your truly English heart derides as weakness every powerful emotion, yet, methinks that even your coldness may comprehend my delight at meeting the companion and friend of my departed mother. The hand of Providence,

•

I devoutly believe, may be traced in this. Hear me, Zoe. Dear Zoe, in despite of Captain Nesmond—the most prejudiced of men—my child shall be called Neno, after my ill-fated mother.” Here she became hysterical.

Perceiving that Therese was bent upon getting up a scene, Mrs. Merton silently retired from the apartment, and for the remainder of the evening occupied herself in examining the treasures of genius with which the noble mansion of the hidalgo was replete.

CHAPTER XIX.

DESPITE Mrs. Nesmond's occasional fits of ill temper and sentimentality, the next nine or ten days passed off agreeably.

The Moor, quick of observation, and endowed with a surprising memory, was a most amusing companion. She seemed intimately acquainted with the habits and customs of all countries. So many wonderful traditions ; so many anecdotes, told with great cleverness. There was no possi-

bility of being ennuied with her society ; but, with all this, the Moor was the votary of a dark superstition and bigotry ; and their contracting influence crushed the exercise of every ennobling sentiment. By nature Zoe was generous, benevolent, unselfish ; but the bigotry which an erroneous education had grafted on her mind, brought forth the bitter fruits of superstition and prejudice, and want of consideration for the views and opinions of others. Thus wedded to her own peculiar beliefs, she condemned all else as heretical ; and, considering herself a devoted Christian, and being an enthusiast, was ready to perform any act, nay, to commit any crime, for the support of her egotistic doctrines. This terrible state of mind soon betrayed itself to the knowledge of Mrs. Merton.

Eve perceived that the Moor had acquired

the most unbounded influence over Mrs. Nesmond. This did not surprise her. Zoe had every attribute to please the capricious, vain Therese. Her former knowledge of Neno Davales gave a touch of romance to this new-born friendship. The Moor's position gratified Mrs. Nesmond's fancy, ever given to select inferiors in rank for her confidants. Then, by well-directed flattery, the Moor gratified Therese's inexhaustible thirst of vanity. Again, Zoe was sincere in her anxiety to serve both Mrs. Nesmond and her child. Still, it was evident that she considered Mrs. Merton the most charming companion; suspecting this, Therese grew jealous and fretful.

The tenth day of Mrs. Merton's visit to her sister arrived, and on the next but one she and Siward proposed returning home. Neither Mrs. Nesmond nor the Moor offered

any objection. The former, with her never-ceasing envy, was perfectly jealous at Zoe's evident pleasure in her sister's society ; and Zoe had a far more powerful motive for wishing Mrs. Merton's absence. Both, however, regretted Siward, for the bright boy had won on their affections.

The same evening, Therese received a letter, breathing tenderness towards her and the babe, from Captain Nesmond ; and with animation he expressed his joy that in three or four days after the receipt of his letter, he expected to be in Cadiz, where they need not again separate, except in the event of Therese wishing to go to England ; he having made arrangements to conduct her to Gibraltar.

Far from pleasure, this announcement evidently agitated Zoe, and put Therese into a rage.

“What brings him back?” she exclaimed ;
“I am quite unequal to be teased with him.
You look surprised, Eve ; but, thank
Heaven ! I am not a Griselda like you ; and
then, I repeat it, all men are a teaze, more
particularly military ones : so exacting in
their selfishness, so fidgety and fussy in
what they term their habits of energy and
system ;—system, indeed, strange system—
to pry into everything for the delectable
purpose of finding fault, upsetting the quiet
and comfort of the household ; and I aver
that men have no right to interfere in house-
hold arrangements ; it is the wife’s province.
Women would be as much justified in at-
tending parade and drilling the soldiers.”
Here, from exhaustion, Therese ceased, but
soon reviving, continued her querulous re-
marks :—

“Captain Nesmond’s presence here can

only excite and injure me ; certainly it can afford no pleasure, dear Eve. Write on the instant, and say that my medical attendant disapproves of his coming, and that I am unequal to see him. Pray, dear Eve, oblige me in this."

"Excuse me," calmly replied Mrs. Merton: "but my letter could not possibly reach Gibraltar until after Captain Nesmond leaves it ; besides, the day after to-morrow Siward and I return home, as I expect Major Merton on that evening ; consequently, Therese, it were better that your husband were here."

The Moor, in general so guarded, exclaimed,—

"Is it possible that Captain Nesmond may be here by Monday or Tuesday, dear madam ? You are not equal to the meeting. In the saints' name, let him be put off !"

“It is too late, Zoe,” she replied, despondingly ; but, clasping the Moor’s hand, —“fret not—for he shall not separate you from me. Of course, there is no necessity for Captain Nesmond learning that you were my ill-fated mother’s friend ; for, ere I ever saw him, my father unjustly prepossessed him against her memory, her country, and her religion.”

The brow of Zoe darkened, but she offered no reply.

“As my nurse, Zoe, Zied Nesmond can offer no objection to your attendance. My friendship and confidence you possess, Zoe. You look at Mrs. Merton ; fear her not, she dare not betray me. I might retaliate.”

Mrs. Merton felt too much contempt at this outbreak of malice to answer.

“Thanks, Mrs. Nesmond, grateful thanks, for permitting me to remain,” exclaimed the

Moor with vivacity ; then, in calmer accents, added, " Mrs. Merton, you, I presume, leave to-morrow. As Captain Nesmond returns so soon, so many visitors would not suit your invalid sister—she still requires repose."

Indignant at what she considered presumptuous, Mrs. Merton haughtily answered,

"It is not my intention to leave until next Monday, and as yet I have not fixed the hour." With these words, embracing Therese, but not noticing Zoe, she retired from the apartment.

Next morning Therese was seriously ill, at least so her sister supposed from her feverish state, which, however, in some degree originated from the sultriness of the atmosphere, the solano or south-east wind just then prevailing. Its effect on Therese was an irritation of the nerves, which led on to raving.

Addressing Mrs. Merton in a rambling, querulous way, she said—

“So you refused to write and prevent Zied Nesmond’s coming here, though I entreated of you, Eve, so to do. Now I am not ashamed to confess that I do not love my husband, though you are so attached to yours, and you are all-impatient for his return to Cadiz. I tell you, Eve, that Merton is considered a despot : and with all your weak love, mark me, he will yet tyrannise over you—then seek not my sympathy : I hate to see your fondness for the tyrant, meek and obedient to his will as a child, it irritates me.—Don’t thus boast to me of his gallant bearing, excusing him on the plea of military discipline ; the love of rule, when practised, spreads from the camp to the house. Oh ! Eve, why were we doomed, for I am certain all is the result of destiny, else I

had never been Zied Nesmond's wife. I hate him. Thank heaven, I have no son to seek for conquest and promotion in fields of strife, blood, and death—oh ! it is horrible.”

Indulging in this wild talk, Therese became quite excited, and suffering from intense heat, insisted upon rising and walking down to the sea, and plunging into the briny waters.

Much terrified, Mrs. Merton opened the lattice to admit a freer air : as she stepped out on the balcony, with surprise she beheld the Moor standing beneath a range of sweet chestnut trees, which bordered an opposite avenue, and with her in deep converse were two ecclesiastics, one of whom was clad in episcopal robes.

Calling from the balcony, Mrs. Merton announced Therese's increase of fever. Zoe instantly returned, while the priests

moved off in the direction of St. Mary's chapel.

"Lady, be not so alarmed," said Zoe to Mrs. Merton, "your sister's illness, resulting from the solano, shall soon pass off—I possess a never-failing antidote: so pray wait here for a few moments—I must be quick."

In about ten minutes she returned, and presented a draught to Therese: it was of a rich amber colour, and of such a delicious aromatic perfume, that the air of the chamber was impregnated with it. Suffering from thirst, Mrs. Nesmond greedily swallowed the liquid.

"What a beautiful glass!" observed Mrs. Merton, taking up the goblet; "it must be crystal; and these gems and gold form such an exquisite mosaic: what does it illustrate?"

"The pearl of inestimable value dissolved

to please Cleopatra's caprice," replied the Moor; "this gem my father gave me: it is not crystal, but of a peculiar glass, which would burst on the instant, if one iota of a drop of poison was introduced; and purchasing my drugs in Spain, I ever use it. Lady, shall I prepare a draught for you?"

"Oh, thanks," cried Eve, "it would be a kindness. Can you believe, Zoe, though the only beverage I have tasted for the last week was orangeade or orgeat, such a strange exhilaration of spirits came over me this morning, that I could not resist dancing about like one possessed, to Siward's delight, and my own confusion; and I feel the same inclination again, in despite of reason."

Zoe joined in her laugh, observing, "All from this south-east wind, unusually exciting and prevalent just now." So, drawing forth

from one of her huge pockets a bottle, "I did not forget an anodyne for you, Mrs. Merton."

She laid it on the table, and was retiring.

"Shall I take it all, Zoe?" demanded Eve.

"Yes, and I hope that your rest may be long and sound; but, Mrs. Merton, better retire to your own chamber: this sultry weather, I wish my patient alone."

The Moor closed the door after her: Eve poured out the draught on the table, and, ere she was aware, Siward caught the goblet, saying, "Oh, mamma, I am so thirsty," and nearly drank half of the liquid, when she snatched it from his hand and finished the draught.

Hearing her chide the boy, Mrs. Nesmond, who was in sincerity greatly attached to Siward, said faintly, "Dear Eve, I am sick and drowsy; pray lay Siward on the bed with me, and retire."

The former part of the request was obeyed ; but, in place of leaving the apartment, Mrs. Merton threw herself on a *fauteuil* near the open lattice, the more powerful scent of the anodyne, which had become oppressive, being there refreshed by breezes which came from the sea, and intermingled with the perfume of the flowers which filled the balcony.

In less than a quarter of an hour, Therese and Siward slept profoundly : the narcotic had a more pleasing effect on Mrs. Merton ; she had not drunk sufficient for slumber, but a delicious languor crept over her limbs and senses—she was neither sleeping nor waking, but there was a charming consciousness of pleasure, as thus reclining she breathed sweet odours from innumerable exotics ; and now borne on zephyrs, wafting through the open lattice came the sounds of

many instruments, played by a party of itinerant musicians stationed on the parade. It was one of the seductive airs of the voluptuous clime, and the vocal performers, from their rich, finely-modulated notes, seemed to be Italians. After a time, the measure changed to the merry fantasies of a *buffa* chorused by peals of laughter.

Though so near, for the moment war and its desolation seemed forgotten : Eve wished to rise and enter the balcony, more particularly as by the striking of tambourines and castanets she concluded that dancing had commenced ; but the soft languor of her frame, though sensible to the raptures of gaiety and music, seemed to shrink from the exertion—even to rise had been a trouble.

Suddenly the last beams of a brightly setting sun illuminated the chamber, the radiant light glancing and sporting around,

when for an instant the heavenly rays concentrated on one of Correggio's noblest productions, that of the Madonna on her knees adoring, in a devout ecstasy, the infant Jesus, as, reclining on a portion of her dress, he lies before her, encompassing the figures with a circle of glory.

Surprised and dazzled at an effect of which description can convey no adequate idea, Mrs. Merton's eyes fixed in admiration on the picture; on the instant, being warned by the sunset, hundreds of bells rang through the city, announcing the hour for prayer; then the musicians beneath, in solemn measure commenced a vesper hymn, in which the congregated crowd joined their voices:—all had been so unexpected, so rapid, so harmonious, it seemed inspiration; and in this enthusiastic burst of devotion men of many nations united—

British, French, Italians, Venetians, Portuguese, Armenians, Orientals, Russians, Swedes, Danes, &c., &c., &c. This world's traffic, the love of gold, had collected them in Cadiz ; but howsoever divided their interests, or opinions, or creeds, all acknowledged the same Supreme Omnipotent God ; and now their spirits elevated, exalted by the sacred melody, simultaneously accorded, pouring forth loud hallelujahs.

CHAPTER XX.

WHILE the crowd beneath thus united in thanksgivings, Eve still reclined in the *fau-teuil*. The glory which for a few moments had played around the Madonna, the solemn sounds of the vesper bells, the seductive breath of the salons impregnated with perfumes, the narcotic she had quaffed—all combined to fill her with sensations at once indefinable and exquisite—it was delicious; still she had a confused sense that the bliss

was delusive,—ideal,—a trance. She wished to retain the rapture a movement might destroy, or the full light which streamed in from the balcony, so she kept her eyes half closed, suppressed her breathing, and remained passive. Oh! that such enchantment might continue—never before had she experienced such delicious enjoyment.

After a time, the Moor crept into the apartment with noiseless steps, cautiously approached the couch where Mrs. Nesmond and Siward slept, then in the same stealthy manner she stood near the *fauteuil*: seeing Mrs. Merton quite passive, she raised the babe from the hammock, wrapped the white and silver cashmere around it, and vanished from the chamber.

Eve started up and looked into the hammock; the child was gone. The discovery filled her with the most fearful ideas; the


reports of kidnappers were general, particularly on the Spanish coast. Zoe had frequently expatiated on the beauty of the infant. No doubt she had stolen it, and the sweet flower was to be transplanted to a foreign land, and devoted, when she grew up, to the worst of all slavery.

Though so much agitated, Mrs. Merton was capable of reflection: she resolved to follow the Moor, and at all risks at least learn the fate of the child. Even had not Therese slept she would not have informed her, as excitement most probably would throw her into hysterics and cause delay.

Casting her mantilla over her head, she hurried down to the parade; it being the vesper hour, all places but those of worship were deserted. The powerful aromatic, which the Moor carried in her pocket, acted as a guide; and with the speed of a lap-

wing, Eve fled, keeping under the shade of the trees: by the time she had gained an ascent, though the perfume had evaporated, she knew her path, by observing at some distance the glitter of the cashmere, in which the babe was enveloped.

Inactive by habit, and burthened with the child, never suspecting that she was followed, the Moor proceeded leisurely; still she commanded the advantage of knowing the path, whereas Mrs. Merton got bewildered in an avenue of low brushwood and loose stones, and when escaped from these, all trace of the Moor was lost. Actually weeping from distress, she thought upon mounting a rising ground: with much difficulty she ascended, and even in her distress of mind, was struck with admiration at the prospect which met her view. The horizon, bounded by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, its



broad bosom buoyant as if with life, supported the vessels of many nations, their distinctive ensigns waving to the breeze, which gently agitating the waves, plumed the ships' rugged sides with a feathery, sparkling, spray ;— and as the evening was far advanced, the noise of the distant city was hushed.

Ever alive to the beauties of Nature, the glorious works of her Creator, Eve sank on her knees : her mind was replete with the poetic feelings of the orient isle of her birth. Stretching out her hands, she exclaimed,

“ Beautiful stars, hosts of heaven, chosen messengers of God, to guide man, erring, sinful man, to redemption, though divinity embodied in innocence and love, oh ! in mercy, lend thy aid to my steps, that I may rescue untainted infancy from slavery and crime.”

Her prayer was heard : still kneeling, in the distance, by the water's edge, she beheld

the glitter of the cashmere ; she sprang on her feet, rushed down in that direction, all doubts being satisfied. Yes, the Moor approached the beach, to dispose of the child to some African of the traders in human flesh. Horrible, most horrible ! Onward she hastened, her path guided by the stars she had invoked, which momentarily increasing in number and brightness, illuminated her path with a silvery light ; at length her progress was checked by gigantic rocks, whose towering heads were shrouded in the clouds.

This tremendous cluster of cliffs formed a bulwark, which screened out farther view, and all clue to the Moor seemed lost ; still Mrs. Merton continued to wander about the cliffs, hoping to discover the path she had taken, when, amidst the solitude, suddenly rose the loud peal of an organ ; it was a

vesper hymn to the Virgin. Directed by the sound, she struck into an unequal path ; it led to the entrance of a half-ruined chapel of singular appearance, and which seemed to have been erected at different periods, without any attention to architectural uniformity.

The chapel stood on a table-rock, jutting boldly into the water. Beneath its foundation, the dashing tides had hollowed out a creek of sufficient space to harbour three or four moderately-sized vessels, protecting them from the south-west wind, which in that direction periodically blows with terrific force. The ascent to the chapel was by a number of steps, rudely hewn out of the solid stone ; the arch, which opened into the vestibule, (the portals had long since mouldered away,) was rudely Gothic ; this led to a broad nave, ornamented, not sup-

ported, by twelve columns of the purest Grecian architecture, for they did not reach to the lofty roof, but were ranged at equal distances, on either side of the nave ; there they stood, even in decay and mutilation graceful memorials of their country's genius. Several aisles branched off from the nave, terminating in altars and alcoves.

Mrs. Merton hurried up the nave—she reached the principal altar ; it was hewn out of one massive stone, and here the chapel was formed, in a cavern ; subsequently, she discovered that from about the circumference of twelve feet, reaching from the principal entrance, the consecrated edifice was hollowed by nature out of the interior of a vast rock.

On this altar four immense wax tapers burned. At a short distance, resting on the out-spread wings of a bronze eagle, was the

baptismal font, surrounded by tapers ; the reflection of their blaze fell upon innumerable stalactites suspended from the cavern's lofty unequal roof, and they shot forth a thousand radiant colours more brilliant than the purest gems ; the illumination was superb, dazzling—the altar seemed encompassed by a glory exceeding the splendour of the rising sun—rendered more lustrous by the deep gloom in which the remainder of the building was involved.

The illumination was so dazzling, that for some moments Mrs. Merton's senses were confused, and she could not correctly distinguish objects ; but soon becoming accustomed to the lustre of the stalactites, she perceived two priests, one in episcopal robes, retiring from the chapel : they passed out by an opening which led to the beach. The next moment was heard the striking of oars

and splashing of water. Transient as had been the view, she felt assured that they were the ecclesiastics whom, at early evening, she had seen conversing with Zoe on the parade.

Zoe stood near the baptismal font, tenderly holding the babe in her arms ; at either side was a Carmelite sister, in flowing grey robes of the order ; at some distance, but within call, stood a tall woman, clad as an Andalusian peasant ; with her was a boy holding a basket.

There needed no questions ; the scene explained itself. Zied Nesmond's child had been baptised in the Roman faith—so abhorrent to his belief and prejudices ; and Therese must have been accessory to the deed ; she was capable of any act which gratified the egotistical love of effect.

Mrs. Merton's first sentiment was joy, at

seeing the precious infant safe ; her next terror intermixed with anger. Stepping forward, she haughtily demanded of Zoe,—

“ What am I to understand from this scene ? Explain ; wherefore did you bring this child ”—and she took it in her arms—
“ to this wild place ? ”

“ Lady, in the performance of a sacred duty, in honour of the saints, and of the most blessed Virgin, have I at great risk snatched that little brand from the eternal burning.”

As the Moor spoke, she tossed her arms wildly on high ; then, flinging herself on her knees, burst forth into a hymn of thanksgiving, in which the Carmelite sisters and the peasants joined.

However displeased, Mrs. Merton could not but admire the unaffected fervour of the Moor's devotion ; and as the consecrated cavern echoed back the words of prayer,

accompanied by the monotonous sound of the restless sea, as it lashed against the rocks, there was something awfully sublime in the whole scene:—a deep sadness pervaded her soul, and oppressed it with presentiments of coming sorrow.

The hymn was concluded, and again she addressed the Moor, observing,—

“ You dared not have committed this deed without the consent of Therese. Is this your boasted affection to your confiding patient—to seduce her on to countenance what must offend her husband,—creating discord where love alone should exist? Mark me, Captain Nesmond, in his abhorrence of popery, will consider this method of baptising his child as pollution, and will have you, Zoe, severely punished.”

“ Beware, lady, of such impious speech,” replied the Moor. “ Happily, the holy sisters

are ignorant of your English tongue, else you might sorely rue the insult to their ancient creed."

Interrupting her, Mrs. Merton said,—

"Think not thus to evade my question. Has Mrs. Nesmond given her consent to this act? Still, the question seems superfluous ;—without it, you *dared* not have had the child of English parents, of consequence, baptized into a faith that you well knew they disapprove."

"Yes, lady, I do answer, with truth and firmness. Therese knew no more of my intention than yourself; had she, her timid nature would have shrunk from the trial, or, like her ill-assorted mother, perished from excitement. Thus I guarded my purpose from her knowledge."

"And what then tempted you to an act which most probably will subject you to condign punishment?" demanded Mrs. Merton.

“Have I not,” she replied, vehemently, “already told you that it was done for Christ’s sake? I was bound by a solemn vow to the act of grace—such I deem it. You already know the circumstances under which I chanced to attend on Mrs. Nesmond; also that I had been attached to her mother, who had honoured me with her protecting friendship. Well, my skill assured me that Mrs. Nesmond’s life was in imminent peril. Dr. McPherson said that the power of man could not save both the mother and child,—I thought so too; but I placed faith in a power he derided; so, by a ruse, I procured his absence; then, with solemn invocations, implored the blessed Virgin to shield the afflicted lady, in the pains of travail—thus preserving her and the child—vowing, should the latter prove a female, that from the hour of its birth, it should be dedicated

to the blessed Virgin, as an oblation for life preserved. Thus, blessed babe!" she exclaimed, snatching it to her arms, and rushing down an aisle, "I have offered you up as a peace-offering, for the sins of your heretical mother. Alas! the offspring of a Davales should not be nurtured in heresy!"

The cold and darkness displeased the child; it screamed aloud. Zoe strove to soothe, but it would not be hushed, though she bore it to the light. The peasant woman then advanced, laid it on her bosom, and as it drew its nourishment, it became tranquil. This circumstance increased Mrs. Merton's surprise.

"Do you nurse this child?" she demanded of the peasant, whose fair, bright countenance pleased her. "Are you an Andalusian? I should have taken you for a daughter of Britain."

The peasant looked at the Moor, but offered no reply.

"You do not understand English," observed Mrs. Merton—"nor I Spanish."

The woman smiled—curtseyed, but was still silent. Not so the Moor, who hastily interrupted,—

"Lady, your sister being unequal to nourish her babe, I procured this woman to perform the tender office. The child thrives; credit me, lady, her milk is not the less pure because she belongs to the true and only church. It is her country's faith; and already she loves the little Zima with a mother's affection."

"Zima!" reiterated Mrs. Merton; "I never before heard that name."

"Among some of our people, Zima means 'atonement.' I am ignorant of the etymology of the word, nor is it of importance; I

merely gave it to the babe as being significant of my offering her up as an atonement for the heresy of her mother. For ages, yea, since the first century of the Christian era, the Davales have been Catholics."

"The christening matters not," coolly observed Mrs. Merton. "Captain Nesmond returns to-morrow; a few days after, his child is to be baptized, according to the prescript of the Protestant church; and, as I understand, a very large company of English are invited to witness the ceremony, and Therese means to nominate her child Neno Davales—after her mother. So, Zoe, your presumptuous liberty in this business goes for nothing—will be effaced."

"Effaced! a solemn sacrament effaced!" she angrily reiterated,—“disbeliever! I mock the effort! No, praise be to the Most High—the Creator—the Mighty One I glory in!

the knowledge that what is done cannot be undone ;—already is the act of grace recorded—accepted above.”

Mrs. Merton had seen too much of fanaticism to attempt to dispute such opinions, so she merely said,—

“ At all events, Zoe, you have acted foolishly, endangering yourself for what is impossible. This dear child will be educated in the Protestant faith ; its purer doctrines, early impressed on her mind, she will despise, it may be, execrate, this presumptuous attempt of yours.”

Zoe smiled, scornfully muttering, “ That be my care ; ‘ what has been purified, rendered clean, man shall not pollute.’ ”

“ You are a visionary,” Mrs. Merton observed ; “ but remember, this child, if she lives, must be heiress to vast wealth, and your rhodomontade, Zoe, will avail little in

preventing her union with some mortal man worthy of her love ; so there will end her mystic tie to the church ;"—and Mrs. Merton laughed aloud.

" You may sneer, lady," said the Moor, tranquilly, " but credit me, the forms that babe passed through this evening can never be set aside ; and remember, should she ever attempt to marry, DEATH shall fill the gay bridegroom's place in her arms. The elect of Christ may not be seduced from the sacred office appointed, and to which the young Christian has been consecrated, this evening, by God's anointed."

" You are positively mad," said Mrs. Merton, rising, " and I am equally so to contend with you. How could you, so humble in position, prevent the marriage of the heiress of Castle Barnulph ?"

" By death !" she vehemently replied.

“ Yes, blessed Virgin : these hands which first introduced the child into life and light, shall consign her to the darkness of the tomb ere she shall burst through the sacred vows which, even before the birth, consecrated her the bride of Christ.”

While uttering these words, the Moor had again hurried the infant to the distant shrine of the three-armed Virgin of stone, the work of men's hands. Mrs. Merton heard her speak aloud in Spanish ; then the two Carmelite sisters advanced from a distant altar, where they had been performing their devotions. All knelt, and burst forth into a hymn ; it sounded like a funeral dirge.

Enervated from fatigue and excitement, Mrs. Merton sunk back, nearly fainting, still attentively observed what was passing. One of the nuns embraced the babe, knelt before it, muttered some words in Spanish,

then fastened round its waist a white ribbon, wrought with some mystic characters. And now the other sister advanced, and having performed a similar part, suspended an amulet—a golden bull—set in pearls of great price, round the consecrated infant's neck : after which the nuns retired to their convent, which was attached to the Cavern Chapel.

Perceiving that Mrs. Merton was faint, Zoe with tenderness administered some recovering drops, observing, “ Lady, a carriage waits, and it will soon convey you to Mrs. Nesmond's.”

“ Moor, look to the consequences, for to-morrow Major Merton shall be acquainted by me with this strange business.”

“ Lady, he shall not, nor mortal, except those who have attended the christening. When the English leave Spain, then report it to whom you please.” The Moor spoke with decision.

“And why, at all events, should Therese, so friendly to you, be kept in ignorance?”

“For many causes, Mrs. Merton, that it suits not to explain; and doubt not but that I, all humble as you deem me, abhor deception, and never practise it, except where I find it absolutely necessary to work out some end of virtue.”

Mrs. Merton shook her head, observing, “To my view, hypocrisy should never be, no matter how exalted the end in view. It is an evil principle to seek good out of evil.”

“And yet, lady, you have for years kept Major Merton in ignorance of your first love, your engagement to Zied Nesmond, now your sister’s husband. Nay, lady, blush not, look not so miserable, I mean no harm, I shall not betray your secret—it would lead you to much sorrow, and you shall not betray mine.”

"Well!" she replied, angrily, "feeling the misery of having one secret from my husband, I shall not double it by keeping another from his knowledge."

"As you please, lady," she replied; "your son's life, the little Siward's, is my hostage; by all the saints of heaven, if you betray me, before six months he shall die; there is poison in Spain; one of the ecclesiastics you saw here to-night is an Inquisitor; if he were betrayed, the whole order would—nay, should—according to their vows, be revenged on his persecutors. Nay, lady, it grieves me that an idle curiosity should have brought you here; it is always dangerous to be involved in the secrets of others."

"It was not curiosity, but love for this dear babe!" she cried, taking it into her arms and bursting into tears, terrified at this fresh responsibility.

"I respect you, lady," said the Moor ;
"for though despising my creed, you are no
bigot, and in all your sentiments I discover
you to be generous, anxious for the recovery
of your sister and the preservation of her
child, though by their deaths you would inherit
vast wealth ; and experience has taught me
that while the love of gain contracts and
withers every nobler feeling, so does gene-
rosity endow the mind with exalted senti-
ments ; and now," she added, "as, happily,
a shower has come on, to cool the solano's
fevered strength, walk with me around this
ancient place ; there is much in it worthy of
notice."

Any attempt to enlighten the fanatic
Moor had been absurd ; and from the fre-
quent scenes of assassination in Cadiz, and
more especially the fearful accounts of the
frequency of poisoning, which Dr. Fox-

ley had related to Mrs. Merton, she felt confident that Zoe's was no idle threat, and that if she betrayed the baptism, Siward's life might be the sacrifice.

Her profession introduced the Moor into the houses of all classes, and her manners were calculated to win confidence. As to Therese, she was almost below contempt, in having, from a vain egotism, spoken of her sister's engagement to a stranger; but then this love of gossip and intimacy with dependants, had from childhood formed a part of Mrs. Nesmond's character; and lightly as such a habit is in general viewed, experience proves that this familiarity with, and love of, inferiors is most demoralizing.

Here, again, the weak point in Mrs. Merton's character was brought forth—her dread of Major Merton, apprehensive of his taking violent measures against those

connected with the child's baptism, and thus endangering Siward. To avoid an uncertain evil, she submitted to the positive one, of a still greater reserve from her husband.

As a heavy shower was just then falling, the Moor walked round the cavern chapel with Mrs. Merton, explaining that the Grecian columns ranged up the entrance aisle, also several of the sculptures, were of great antiquity, and that the savans of Spain asserted they had been collected so far back as the fifth century, when, by some extraordinary and mystic revolution, the waves of the Mediterranean retreating from the beach to a vast distance, exposed to view the imbedded ruins of a noble city, supposed to be that in which rose the temple of Hercules, the pride and glory of the heathen world.

Even amidst the buried remains, there was such grandeur in its conception, such artistic knowledge in the execution, such taste in its adornments, though in part disfigured, and its sublimity lessened by the fantastic idols of heathen worship, embodiments oft of the grosser passions ; still, on the whole, the admiration of the Spaniards of the fifth century for these noble proofs reached to such enthusiasm, that they adopted the pagan opinion that the temple had been the work of deities. Undoubtedly the genius which guided such art, must have been the gift of supreme power ; pity that such talent should have been dedicated to works of superstition.


“At some more convenient time, lady,” said the Moor, “I will amuse you with some of the legends connected with this chapel. They are interesting as well as

wonderful, and well authenticated — but just now I am impatient to return, as we must be back ere Mrs. Nesmond rouses from the effect of the anodyne.”

So saying, followed by Mrs. Merton, the nurse and baby, she hurried to the carriage, and they reached Cadiz some time ere Therese or Siward awoke from their sound slumber.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON the following morning, accompanied by Siward, Mrs. Merton left the Nesmonds' for her own residence, where, a few hours subsequently, Major Merton joined her, after his short absence so delighted to see his Eve and the boy, that he seemed quite a lover. To his request that she would accompany him on a congratulatory visit to Mrs. Nesmond, under the plea of head-ache she excused herself; aware that Captain Nesmond's arrival in Cadiz was hourly expected,



and being fully resolved to shun every chance of an interview with her former lover.

On the next day, Major Merton entered her apartment, hastily exclaiming, "Eve, I do consider Captain Nesmond a confounded coxcomb, and deficient in common courtesy; and in respect to you, he has volunteered, it seems, to go off to Salamanca, on some special mission. I shall cut his acquaintance, for evading so pertinaciously being introduced to you, his wife's sister: the upstart! he is puffed up, no wonder, at his good fortune. Not kind, Eve, to leave his wife so soon again, and she so delicate: I would not act thus, would I, Eve?" kissing her. "Don't fret, love; I see you are vexed at Therese's being slighted."

Mrs. Merton was decidedly wrong in being reserved to her husband; but he was so stern in his wisdom, and so unrelenting in his anger, that he repulsed all confidence.

Major Merton also prided himself on a sternness of purpose and decision of action, which set all things but truth at defiance.

At this period Mrs. Merton removed to Chaclana with Siward. Major Merton was anxious to send them to England, for Cadiz was in a terrible state of confusion and warfare, the French occupying the shores of the bay ; and while, from the want of sufficient troops, they dared not attempt a regular attack upon the Isle of Leon, they annoyed, by every means in their power, the town and the shipping.

It was five weeks after Mrs. Merton's removal to Chaclana that she received a few hurried lines from Therese, saying, that on the following day she proposed leaving Cadiz for Gibraltar. In consequence of which, that morning she had had her baby baptized in the simplest form, by the chap-

lain of ——— ; the name given, Neno Davales, being after her unhappy mother.

The observation this laconic letter might at another time have awakened, was lost in a deeper anxiety : well might Mrs. Merton execrate the war so loudly vaunted by others.

We have said that Major Merton had been appointed to a command at the siege of Fort Matagorda : it is situated about two miles from the city, and its possession by the French was considered as an object of the first importance ; and for two months the siege had lasted, during which the British performed deeds of valour and self-devotion equal to any recounted in classic verse. But the star of England had not then reached the zenith, to which the genius of Wellington, supported by a brave soldiery, so soon after elevated it. The French gained, for the time being, possession of

had a favourable voyage, Major Merton's health visibly improving. After landing at Portsmouth, they proceeded by short stages to Barnulph, where they were most kindly welcomed by its noble hostess.

Nearly two years elapsed, ere Colonel Merton was capable of resuming his usual habits of riding and walking. As the war still continued, he would have followed the bent of his mind, decidedly military, and joined as a volunteer—but for that effort he was unequal ; to his energetic mind inactivity and want of occupation were unbearable. Though by no means uninformed, still he had no decided taste for literature ; under these circumstances he gladly accepted an appointment in Ceylon : it was just, in all its duties, what exactly suited his views ; so immediate preparations for departure to the East were commenced.

Mrs. Merton was in perfect joy at this arrangement—she preferred the East to Europe, but a more powerful cause operated in her mind ; Therese and her child were expected at the Castle, her husband had been promoted, and having joined the troops in the very *melée* of the battle, Therese had decided on returning to England.

To say that Mrs. Merton feared her sister, would ill describe the dread with which that capricious woman inspired her ; and she was so capricious, that no one could possibly depend on her humour or calculate to what lengths it might lead ; and most unhappily Mrs. Merton's early engagement to her brother-in-law, gave Mrs. Nesmond power to injure.

Eve had no reserve from Lady Barnulph, and had confided to her the secret of the private baptism. It filled the kind old dame

with regret and terror ; she never doubted but that it had been performed under the sanction of Therese. From the period of receiving Zied Nesmond's explanation of his marriage, and which Mrs. Merton had forwarded to her (though the noble lady could not cease to love the child of her rearing,) she ceased to esteem ; consequently, when Eve required her support and evidence in the confession she now resolved to make to her husband, of all those painful secrets, ere she quitted the Castle, unhappily as it proved though so essentially amiable, the good old dame's weak attachment to Therese conquered her judgment and truth.

“ No, Eve,” she exclaimed, “ if you would not bow down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, do not, oh ! for love of me, do not betray, to one so haughty and unrelenting as Colonel Merton, Therese's folly, crime I

might term it, to form a friendship with the fanatic Moor, who in point of fact, was the chief source of her father's misery. Now see the consequences ; Zied Nesmond would instantly separate his child from its mother, and place it under the care of some of his puritan Scotch relatives. And Therese could not be prevented from residing near her child. Thus, my old age would be desolate ; then I much doubt, how Colonel Merton would receive a confidence so long postponed ;—and oh ! I could not endure the contempt that austere man would cast on the memory of your father, my dear son ;—poor Harold ! let your ashes, at least, rest in peace," she sobbed violently, " though your sojourn on earth was tribulation and sorrow."

Eve's was not a heart to resist such an appeal ; she mingled her tears with Lady Barnulph's, observing,

“ My beloved parent, though against my judgment, I yield to your wishes conditionally that, should any imperative cause arise either for the little Neno's, — Therese's beautiful child, or for my own happiness, that I may then confess all to Colonel Merton.”

“ Best, if not dearest of my grandchildren, for the ligaments of affection by which infancy under our care entwines round the heart, are rarely equalled—it is more than my wish, it is my command, should any necessity arise, that renders your explanation of these dark facts necessary, that you should instantly explain them, not only to your husband, but to the whole world. My love for Therese, I admit is a weakness ; still, dear Eve it cannot render me unjust to you ; and in all sincerity, I think, under existing circumstances, that

your wisest part is not to enter into these painful explanations with your husband."

Mrs. Merton felt relieved by this advice from Lady Barnulph. She brought sophistry to her aid against what her better principles felt to be wrong. "Therese is right," she reflected; "the time for confession is past. Now that I am going to India, in all probability I shall never again see the Nesmonds—heaven grant it—and then it were cruel to Colonel Merton, as well as to myself, to break in, by candour the domestic happiness we enjoy."

Thus she laid the flattering unction to her soul, acting against her higher convictions of duty, the soft still voice of conscience and the manly advice of Zied Nesmond, to harbour no secrets from the husband to whom she had plighted her virgin vows of honour and obedience.

Sincerely attached to Lady Barnulph, Eve shed tears of sincere sorrow at their parting ; in all other respects, she gladly bade farewell to England.

END OF VOL. I.



